

# THE RED BOOK

## MAGAZINE

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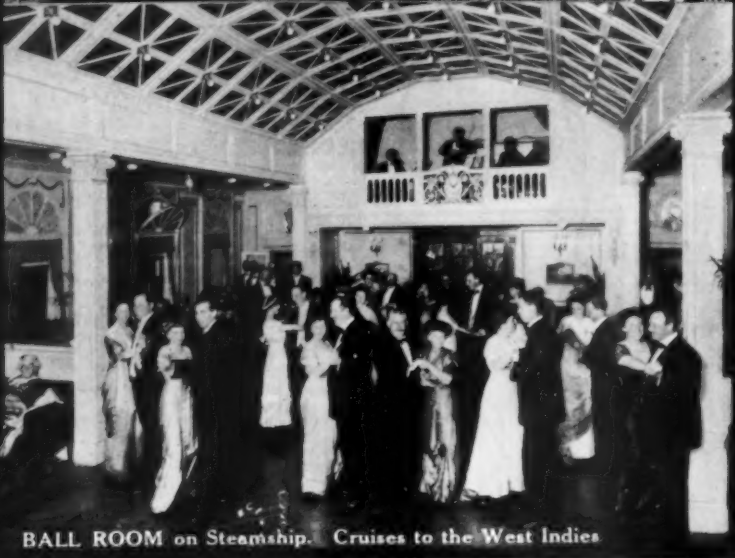
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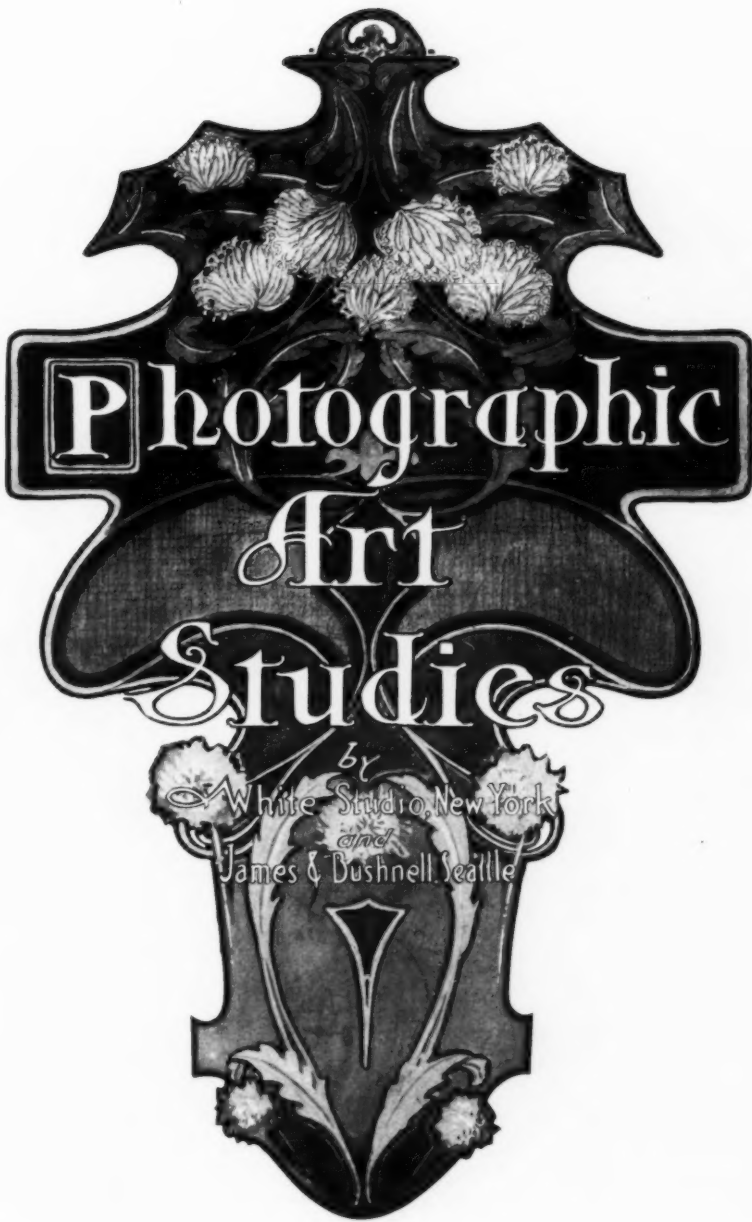
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in Vaudeville

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in "The Governor's Lady"  
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GREVILLE MOORE  
The Vampire Girl in The Ballet of 1830  
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Another Pose of Greville Moore  
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in "Officer 666"

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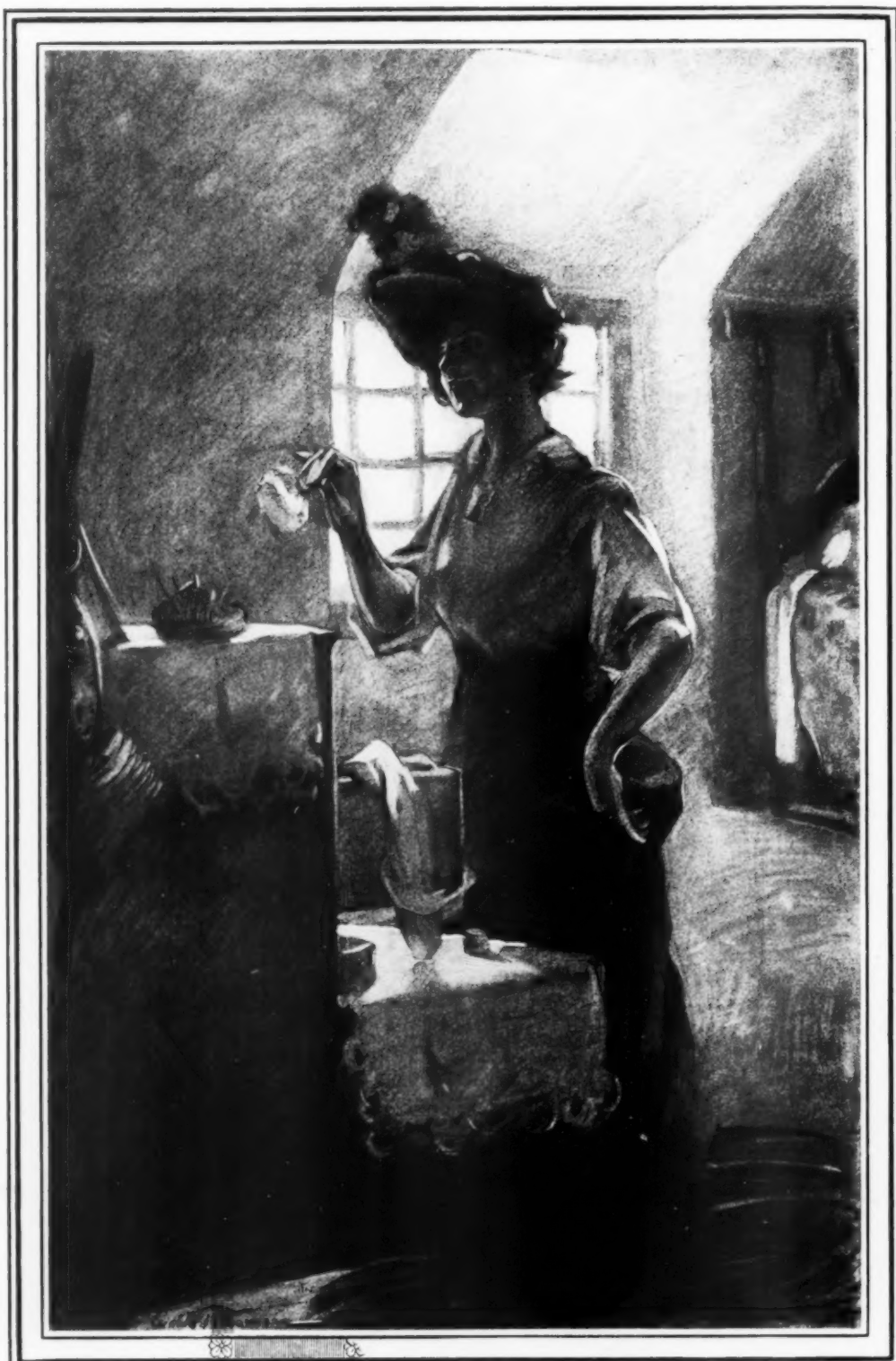


"AMORITA"  
at the Winter Garden  
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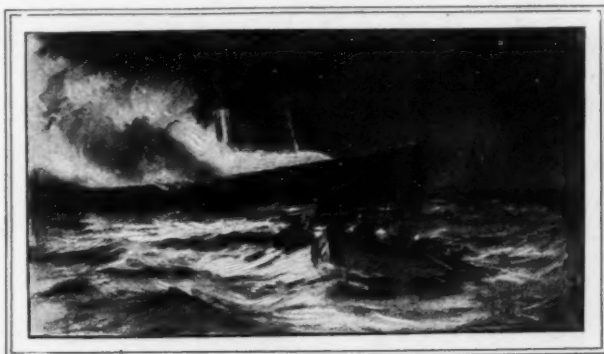


She clumsily powdered her brown skin; powdered her brow and her nose and her chin and her neck.  
The effect was ghastly.

*From "A SISTER OF SHALOTT" by HARRIS MERTON LYON, page 109.*

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NO. 1

RAY LONG, EDITOR



# The Sleeping Ship

A New Wireless Story

by EDWIN BALMER

Co-Author of "The Surakarta," and Author of "Via Wireless," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN NEWTON HOWITT

**I**T was eleven o'clock at night, ship's time, on the second night out from Gibraltar; and as the new twin-turbined *Danube*—fourteen thousand tons—bored into the black North Atlantic swell north-west by west on the "great circle" for New York, the sea-splash, when the bow dipped, flew the length of the promenade deck. The canvas shelter-strips, lashed to the rail during dinner so that the passengers might stay for a while longer in their steamer-chairs, had become useless hours before. Besides myself, only two men remained above.

Drawing together against the gale, we three lay in our chairs forward of the funnels—the taller man, with tanned, peculiarly strong face, with bushy head

bare, but with two thicknesses of rugs wrapped about him, was in the chair second beyond mine; his stockier, plaid-capped and ulstered friend with firm, spiritual features, in the chair next to me. For an hour this one had been addressing to me his terse, nervous trivialities; for the bareheaded man dozed, unconcernedly, stirring at intervals only to shake the brine from his cheeks as the larger waves drenched us, and immediately falling to sleep again.

The man talking to me seemed always leading his trivialities along a brink of conversation over which he hesitated to push them.

"What do you think of—apprehensions of danger?" he asked me more directly at last.

"Indigestion!" the rugged-wrapped one, suddenly starting up, announced. He sat up, shedding his rugs, and glanced down the deck. It was dark now, except for the single electric lights left burning over the door to the cabin corridors. There were only four of them for the whole length of the cabins—glowing weakly yellow and dimmer each moment as the mist of the flying salt-rime settled about them. "Come to bed!" The tall man stood up, laughing as he was soaked through while examining his watch. "It's almost one."

"You're keeping Gibraltar time," the other protested. "I'm staying up a while yet."

"Apprehending—what?" the bushy-haired one waited with a smile.

"Oh, I don't know," the plaid-capped one evaded, uneasily.

"All right! G'night!" the thin one yawned at me. "Stay as long as you feel foreboding, Austin." He touched his mate's shoulder with clumsy affection. "You can't wake me coming in." He slid skillfully down the slippery boards to the light over the last door, and disappeared.

"What're you waiting up for?" Austin demanded suddenly of me.

"Oh, I rather like the sea getting up."

"Not any—*feelings*, then?"

"What sort of feelings?"

"Oh—" He went to the rail where it was even wetter, without answering. I, being ulstered too, followed. "The sort of feelings he won't have anything of." Austin jerked his head after his friend. "His job is science, you know, earthquakes, volcanoes and such trifles. He knows how gravity, electricity, radio-activity—one of a dozen other natural causes he can name, but I can't—is at the bottom of everything. He's Kerffers, you see."

"Kerffers, the physicist? You mean—"

"'Natural Causes' Kerffers; yes."

"Then you're Austin, the—"

"Evangelist. Correct. But it's a bro-mide to comment on the strangeness of the combination. However, you can see that, if it's in his business to find natural causes, it's in mine to believe that there's a good deal else—sometimes at

least—besides natural causes that can do things. I'll agree that more people feel foreboding from indigestion than from any other reason; but still there are other reasons."

"To-night, for instance?"

"Oh, I'm not feeling there'll be trouble for us; but—" He gazed out over the black water, unsatisfied.

We edged slowly forward along the rail, facing the spray and splash which now was flying steadily. It was getting very cold, and the rain seemed to have ceased. The masthead light, high above the mist from the waves, was clear. We were forward of the bridge; as the officers there communicated with the look-out in the crow's nest by telephone, we could not hear their voices; but the extra look-out, perched somewhere ahead in the dark drench at the bow, shouted back at regular intervals and they seemed to signal to him from the bridge, somehow, that they heard.

"Where's the 'wireless' cabin? Oh, where's the 'wireless' operator?" A woman's cry startled us about.

She had come up behind us—a young woman of gentle bearing, without covering for her head, her hair in a thick, loose braid from which the wind was blowing it. She wore, apparently, only a heavy cloak drawn over her night-dress. The gale, whipping about her ankles, showed them bare above her shoes, which had been drawn on hurriedly and left unlaced.

We brought her quickly back from the rail and wrapped about her the driest rugs from our chairs. "What's wrong?" the evangelist asked, quietly.

"I don't know! Something—that's all I know! It's with my husband! Where's the 'wireless' operator?"

"You mean the doctor?"

"The 'wireless' operator! My husband's not here! He's on the *Assyria*!"

"On the *Assyria*?"

"Yes; he was called down to Rome without me; then home. We'd been on our wedding-trip. I came down to Gibraltar to catch him on the *Assyria*, but missed it. He had to go on without me." She was speaking coherently, staring ahead.



"What's wrong?" the evangelist asked quietly. "I don't know," she answered. "Something—that's all I know! It's with my husband. He's on the *Assyria*." And the *Assyria*, I remembered, was some three hundred miles ahead of us.



The *Assyria*, which had left Gibraltar eighteen hours before us, was there—some three hundred miles ahead of us, I remembered, when we last heard from her by "wireless." It was a message of mere weather reports and polite trivialities to put upon our bulletin board. Everything was all right aboard her then. She was fifteen thousand tons—larger than our ship. The gale should trouble her as little as it did us. As it was impossible for this girl to have heard since the "wireless" cabin closed two hours before, there could have been no grounds for this sudden fear. But as I glanced at the evangelist, he evidently did not agree with me.

"Your husband—he was not sick when you heard last?"

"No! He was very well! I know I have no reason, but—but I *know* something is wrong now! I can at least send a message to him. Where's the 'wireless' cabin? Take me to it!"

"It's shut. We've only one operator. He's not required to work at night except in emergencies or dangerous weather. He's asleep."

"Then I shall wake him! Take me to him!" the girl commanded Austin.

I stayed on deck while they went in. He evidently had persuaded her, under pledge to return with the operator, to go to her own cabin and dress more warmly. She was better clothed, if little less disheveled, when she returned to the deck with the evangelist. The operator, in trousers, sweater and coat, came with them, regarding both suspiciously. As the "wireless" cabin was back of the bridge and but little below it, a second officer came to the door after the operator had entered and turned on the light.

"The lady thinks there's trouble on the *Assyria*," the man explained, as one explains the humoring of a child. "This gentleman woke me up for her. Her husband's on the *Assyria*." He cut in his key, irascibly—regulated the receiving apparatus, adjusting the telephone-receiver sounders to his ears. The dynamos in the engine room were supplying current.

The second officer looked at me and I returned his smile, separating myself

from the two waiting tensely as the operator listened. But the operator's expression was changed from one of forced humoring. His jaw was tightened, his hands twitched and his eyes were fixed, serious.

"What is it?" The woman seized his shoulder.

"It's S. O. S., sir!" he reported to the officer.

"S. O. S.!" the girl cried. "The signal of distress?"

The officer moved swiftly. "From what ship, Craig?"

"You'd better take her out, sir!" the operator motioned.

"You mean it's from the *Assyria*!" The girl fought them.

"Look out!" Craig warned us back; and the flash of the blinding blue spark, the deafening "cra-ash! crash! cra-ash!" of the mighty electric charge leaping across the spark gap, sent its answer out to the sea.

The evangelist got the girl out of the cabin, somehow, before the sending was done. "Reached 'em?" the second officer muttered in the suspense after the spark was quiet.

The operator shook his head for silence. The gust that rattled the door passed.

"The *Assyria's* on fire, sir!" the operator whispered raucously, straining to keep his own voice from dimming the almost inaudible rasps in the telephone-receivers strapped over his ears. "They found fire in the hold two hours ago! Something exploded and scattered fire through the cargo. They're burning almost everywhere below decks. They're fighting it; but it's beyond control. They don't hope to last three hours!"

"Three hours! Where are they?"

The operator, listening, scrawled the figures for the position upon his pad. The officer, reading them, swore hoarsely.

"Three hours! And they're three hundred and thirty miles ahead of us! If we could do our best twenty knots and they could make eighteen, and were headed for us now, we couldn't meet them in eight hours! And their boats can't live long, loaded with women, in



this sea to-night! What's the use of their telling us that?"

The operator raised his face, become almost haggard in his last moment of strained listening.

"Sir, they didn't know it was us. I didn't tell who was answering. They thought we were the *Huron*, just ahead of them, so they think they're safe."

"The *Huron*?"

"Just ahead of them, west-bound, too, sir! I was talking with her man like I was with the *Assyria's* before I went to bed. She's not fifty miles ahead of them—perhaps not more than forty; but she's out of sight and bound the same way. They've been trying to call her for two hours; but they can't get her. They thought we were the *Huron* when I answered!"

"You mean the *Huron's* man must be asleep like you were?"

"Yes, sir; he said good-night before I turned in; I talked with the *Assyria* then, and we both went to bed."

"Then ever since they found the fire they've been keeping on after the *Huron*, and now they think they've got her?"

The operator held his hand over the sending key.

"Shall I tell who they've got and to turn around and try to make us before they burn up?"

"With three hours? Tell them they haven't got the *Huron*, man! Tell them quick! Tell them to call it, call it, and keep on calling till they get it. It's their only chance! Tell them to think of nothing else! If they were steaming for us now we couldn't reach them in seven hours!"

"But you can't get a ship by 'wireless' if the man isn't at his key, sir! Or even if he was in the room without his receivers strapped to his ears! You can't rouse anybody—you can't call anyone to the key by 'wireless.' They've only the chance of the man going to his key and catching him there!"

"What other chance have they at all?" the officer retorted, and slid the door and disappeared into the wind as the spark behind me crashed out, hopelessly.

I went down to the deck, to be encountered by the evangelist and the girl he

had in care. Others already were collecting about them—both men and women hastily bundled in thick clothes and hugging steamer rugs and great coats, understanding vaguely that the trouble was not upon our boat, that it was three hundred miles beyond the blackness ahead; but they pressed to the forward rail and fought for place to stand against it, staring blankly out over the bow.

"No one is reported hurt upon the *Assyria*," was all I could say to the girl who first had stirred us. "It's fire—not wreck; and they're fighting it. They're all right just now. The *Huron's* only fifty miles ahead of them. They're calling it now. It can get every one safe."

"Then why are we getting up speed after them?" some one asked.

There was no question but that we were increasing speed. From the comfortable sixteen and seventeen knots, which we had been steaming, the engines were driving us two, at least, perhaps three, knots faster. The rack and strain, as we pushed into the waves, made it undeniable that we were raising "full speed ahead" quite to the forced limit of our engines. As the men in the stokehold spread fresh coal over their fires, red sparks flew from the funnels, burned and glowed an instant overhead and then suddenly were swallowed in the smelling, dense smoke from the hasty firing.

With the privilege of one who had been in at the first, I returned to the "wireless" cabin. The operator long had ceased his sending; he sat leaning forward, almost listlessly in his chair, his face set in a dull, sullen expression which did not change, his telephone receivers strapped over his ears, listening. The second officer, who had returned, leaned with one hand on the rail inside the cabin, watching him. He jerked, now and then, impatiently.

"Just three and three and three, over and over again," the operator described the hopeless, unending succession of three dots, three dashes and three dots—the iterated and iterated again S. O. S., the international code call for help in the final extremity upon the sea.

"Now they're giving the *Huron's* call—H, R, N; now it's three, three, and three again."

"So they're keeping on after the *Huron*?" I asked the officer.

"If the fire's in their after hold, it must be hell in the engine-room," the officer grated. "But they're after the *Huron*; she's their only chance."

"There's no possible ship meeting them the other way?"

He studied again, perfunctorily, the Marconi communication chart upon the wall of the cabin, which gave the date and proper position of every ship carrying "wireless" upon the North Atlantic.

"The *Theban's* coming out, of course," he muttered. "But she's too far south of us. She stops at the Azores east-bound. We've been working north for the great circle ever since leaving Gibraltar. There's no chance the *Theban's* even in the communication zone. It's the *Huron* for them—or us picking up what's left of their boats to-morrow."

"There's no chance of their overtaking the *Huron*—I mean their getting where the *Huron* might see them."

He shook his head. "The *Assyria's* slower. They only hope they're holding the *Huron* even now. But—what is it?" he noted the change in the operator's attitude.

"Nothing—just they're giving me something to do!" The man sprang with relief to his key. "They think there's a chance their signals are skipping the *Huron*—Hertzian waves do that, sometimes. They want me to try!"

"Cras-ash!" The blinding flash and the detonation or discharge brought relief to us all. Three short crashes, three longer detonations of the current, three shorter: "S. O. S!" Then, "*Huron! Huron!* S. O. S!" he called.

I waited till we knew that the trouble was not that the signals from the burning *Assyria* had been skipping.

"He's asleep!" The operator ceased at last. "The 'wireless' can't wake him up!"

The lights were all on upon the deck as I went down. The deck was crowded with passengers, more pouring from the cabin companion-ways. Stewards and

stewardesses were up and about, too, attending to the passengers. For all ages and conditions were roused. Each new group, though told by everyone else that the trouble was upon the *Assyria* eighteen hours ahead, pushed forward first to stare over the bow, reckless of the wet wind and the flying spray; then they gathered in nervous, shivering parties, shifting and re-forming.

The alarm had aroused the second cabin section, too; as I passed aft, I saw the other smoking-room and the saloon alight and crowded. Kerffers, as I met him, told me that the news was spread even through steerage shut below decks. However it had been given out, the first cabin, at least, had it accurately.

"They've got to get the *Huron*?" the woman who first had stirred us clamored of me. "And the *Huron's* operator's not in the cabin!"

There was nothing to do but to admit it.

"And you say—you all say there's not any way for the 'wireless' to call anyone into the cabin! There's not any! There's no chance at all of making them hear unless one man—the operator—happens to get up and go into the cabin and strap his receivers over his ears! Even then it would be hard enough for him to hear!"

Again there was nothing for it but the assent of silence. Kerffers was standing beside me. His strong, good features winced as the woman turned to him, searching for some better hope. He ran his hand helplessly through his hair.

"There's no hope—no hope he might go to the cabin or they might call him?" She appealed direct to him.

He shook his head. "The officers on watch would wake him only when there was some emergency they know of, or if there was so great a storm they might think there'd be trouble on some other boat with 'wireless.' The sea's not quite high enough for that now. There's nothing more than we're doing that anyone can do."

"There's a great deal more; and we will do it!" Austin's voice, behind us, surprised us both. The evangelist's face, less strong in line than Kerffer's, but

now in this extremity imbued with a power and will superior to his own, met us as we turned. "There's something greater than dynamos and Hertzian waves to give power tonight!" He spoke, inspired. "If they on the *Assyria* could rouse you,"—he spoke directly to the woman—"without the help of the 'wireless' and make you rouse us, can't we in turn—the hundreds of us here—get the *Huron's* operator out of his bed as well?"

"What?" The girl caught at it, hysterically. "What?"

Kerffers looked at him. "I'd like to be able to believe it. Austin," he rebuked gently. "I'd like to be able to believe it."

"How can we here do anything else," the evangelist returned, "when we've seen what we have already to-night?"

The scientist tried to prevent him. "The one co-incidence of a woman's fear with a justification for it—a co-incidence of the sort makes you forget the thousands of times they have no foundation at all. If they on the *Assyria* sent this impulse to this woman here, why couldn't they send another to the *Huron*? If we willing it all together can get the *Huron's* operator to go to his key now, why can't we or the people on the *Assyria* signal the *Huron's* captain direct?"

"It is necessary only to get the 'wireless' operator from his bed," the evangelist rejoined. "We can do that! All of us together can surely do that!"

"We can do it!" The hysterical girl caught it up. "We must!"

Women and some of the men about us heard and came closer. Austin turned to them and spoke with the magnetism and spreading inspiration by which he could always draw men's souls to him. The crowd around him grew and grew; all along the deck the new excitement spread.

Kerffers worked himself quietly away, I with him. We went up to the "wireless" cabin together. The officer who was still there with the operator recognized me and let us in, mechanically. The clock showed that more than half an hour had gone since I was there.

"The *Assyria's* burning up! My God,

their ship's burning up under them!" the officer whispered to me for vent. "They don't get the *Huron*."

"Three, three, and three!" The operator, sitting strained, with muscles drawn, teeth clenched and eyes staring, continued his bitter counting of the call from the *Assyria* over and over again. "Three, three, and three! Now *Huron*; *Huron*! Now they're waiting for the answer again. But they don't get 'em! They don't get 'em!" He tore the receivers from his ears and, standing up, sprang upon his key.

"Wake up! Wake up! Damn you, wake up!" he shouted with the cras-ash, cra-ash of his spark as he sent. "Sir!" he cried his justification to his superior, "they're staying in the engine-room and in the stokehold of the *Assyria* with the decks burning above 'em! They're staying to keep up near the *Huron*! And the *Huron's* running away from them because we can't get 'em!" He quieted himself to snatch up his receivers again and listen vainly. "Good God, sir. I talked with that man on the *Huron* three hours ago. He told me what he had for supper! He told me he had a gooseberry tart! Now I can't get him!"

He collapsed into his chair, his receivers over his ears, dully listening. Without needing to ask, we knew he was hearing only the same repeated and repeated iteration of the three, three, and three call for help from the *Assyria*. A strange swell of sound from below surprised us—of at first a few score and then hundreds of voices singing. The words we could not make out; but the tune, even though torn by the wind, was familiar. It was the song sung the world over for the safety of those in danger at sea; and it was sung as only the evangelist could inspire people's souls to sing.

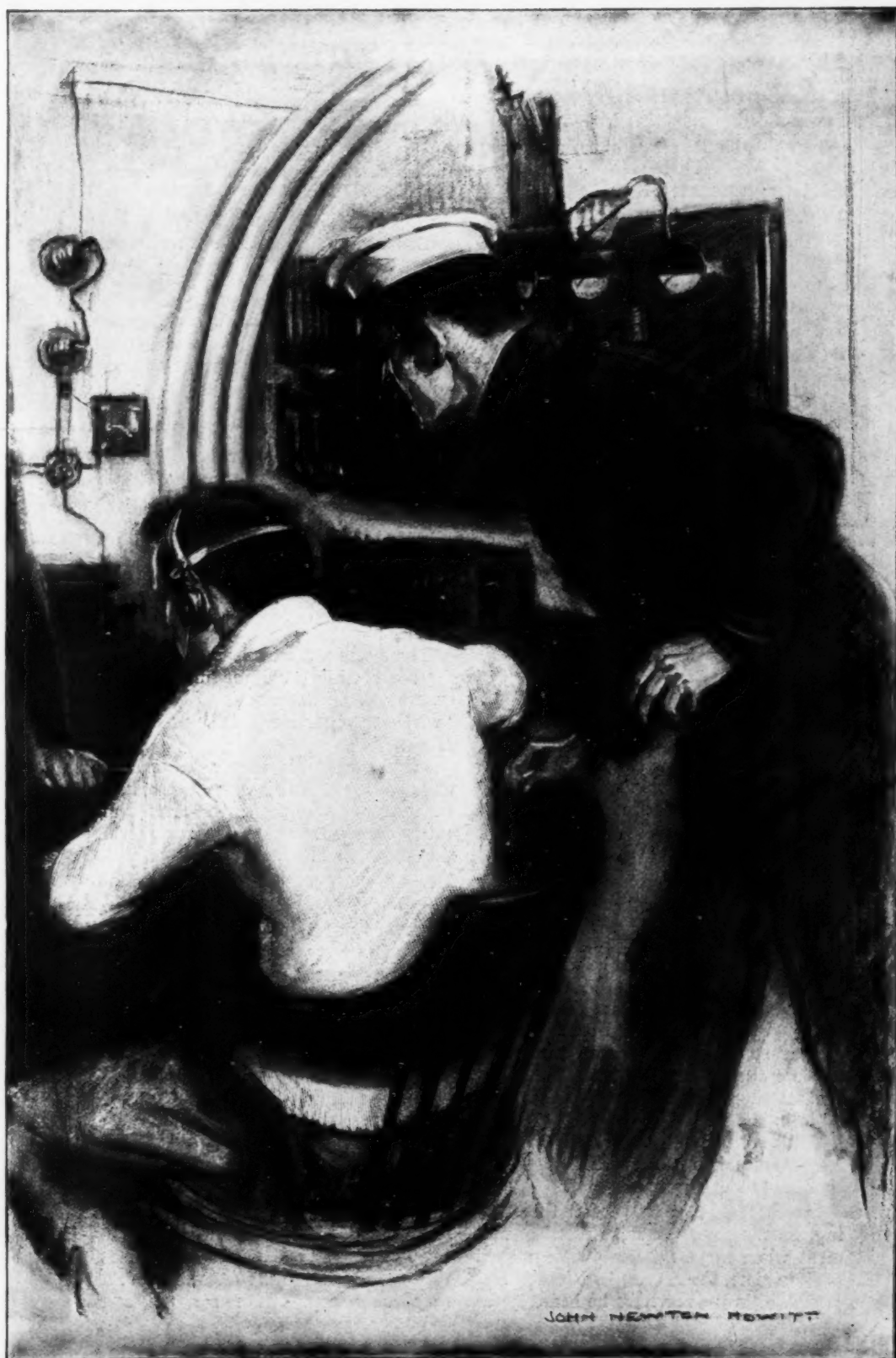
Eternal Father! strong to save,  
Whose arm hath bound the restless  
wave,  
Who bid'st the mighty ocean deep  
Its own appointed limits keep:  
Oh hear us when we cry to Thee  
For those in peril on the sea!

It ceased, after one verse; silence followed, broken only at irregular intervals by a half-shouted unison.



"Don't swear, sir!" the evangelist bid. "But call the *Huron* again at this moment! Five hundred souls to-ing through the cabin. Call!" he pressed down the key himself in his exaltation. "Call!" the three short, the three long, and the three short signals can-





JOHN NEWTON HEWITT

gether summon that now there be someone at the *Huron's* key. So send, man, send! He may be only pass-  
he commanded as the operator pushed him away and himself pressed the key, and made  
nonade us again. "Now listen!" the exorter ordered. "Listen!"

"Austin's talking to them now." Kerffers nodded to me. He glanced at the useless "wireless" instruments. "I can hope, if I can't believe, he can do it."

The operator, with a choke, sat up and began to write.

"What is it?" his superior demanded.

"Dispatches for relatives from the people on the *Assyria*, sir," the operator rasped. "They're still calling the *Huron* and waiting for answer; but, you see, they've given it up." He tore the page off the pad and pushed it toward us, ready to write the next.

Kerffers looked to me. "They can't launch their boats half full to-night—if they had boats enough anyway."

I motioned to the page torn off. "They know it!"

The operator ceased to write. "Are they trying for the *Huron* again?" the ship's officer asked.

"No; good-by to us now! His current's going. They can't live in the engine-room any more. But he thinks the ship can last a little longer and they can live forward of the fire awhile if—"

"You can get the *Huron* for him?"

The operator, biting his lips, leaped at his key for answer. "Cra-ash!" the whole power of the ship's great dynamos shattered out their demand. "Crash!" again and again the current detonated. It blinded us with its burning blue flashes, as the current tore almost ceaselessly across the spark-gap; it deafened us, shut up in there, so that the wind and the sound of the five hundred people singing which came with the wind again, could not be heard. But we knew that three hundred miles ahead, the greatest impulse that science could send through the air so far, could scarcely cause to tremble the most delicate diaphragm in the telephone receivers lying upon the table in the *Huron's* "wireless" cabin—and that, cry as our operator might to our engine-room for current, he could send no louder alarm.

He listened, of course, after the sending, on the chance that at this last moment when the *Huron* might be turned back in time, the *Huron* had heard. But from within the receivers he heard nothing

and from without, only the swell of hundreds of voices in unison:

O Trinity of love and power!  
Our brethren shield in danger's hour;  
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,  
Protect them wheresoe'er they go;  
Thus evermore shall rise to Thee  
Glad hymns of praise from land and sea!

The operator swore as he raised his head and the door from the deck opened.

"Don't swear, sir!" the evangelist bid.

"But call the *Huron* again at this moment! Five hundred souls together summon that now there be some one at the *Huron's* key. So send, man, send! He may be only passing through the cabin. Call!" He pressed down the key himself in his exaltation. "Call!" he commanded as the operator pushed him away and himself pressed the key, and made the three short, the three long, and the three short signals cannonade us again.

"Now listen!" the exhorter ordered. "Listen!"

There was a tense silence; then:

"We got him! We got him! He's answering S. O. S. from the *Huron*!" the "wireless" operator cried. "From the *Huron*!"

He drowned his own voice and ours as he volleyed madly with his spark, detonating out over the three hundred and thirty miles of sea to the rescue ship, the situation and position reckoning of the burning *Assyria*, whose own installation was silent.

"Understand you!" The reply abbreviated itself in the receivers over the operator's ears. "Are headed for *Assyria's* position full speed!"

"The *Assyria's* position!" the evangelist echoed. "The Power that brought our warning to the *Huron* will surely have brought it in time so that they find the *Assyria* itself!" He burst from the cabin and returned to the throng waiting him upon the deck. We heard their hysterical shout as he gave them his news and his confidence.

"Tell to the *Huron*," the officer beside us commanded, "that *Assyria* was keeping after them and would hold men in the engine-room to the last minute. They may have kept steam for the screw



after the power for their current was gone. In any case the *Assyria* must have kept well within fifty miles!"

The operator, after he sent, bent over his instruments. The sound of singing came up to us again, no longer in the tones of invocation and imploring. It rose as a great, triumphant outpouring of voice.

From rock and tempest, fire and foe,  
Protect them wheresoe'er they go;  
Thus now shall ever rise to Thee  
Glad hymns of praise from land and sea!

"The *Huron* is saying," the operator read to us, "'Can already see toward position given for *Assyria* glow of flames. Believe we may now be within twenty miles!'"

"Twenty miles—with it burning above decks so they can see it from the *Huron*!" the officer repeated. "The *Huron* may make twenty knots the hour like us—but no less!"

"And already they're giving thanks down there." Kerffers motioned to me. He and I stayed in the cabin.

"The *Huron's* sure it's the flames from the *Assyria* they've made out," the operator read to us. "They're sending up rockets on the *Huron* on the chance they can see them coming from the *Assyria*."

There was nothing more to do but wait. "At least Austin's keeping them occupied down there," Kerffers commented to me. The evangelist's voice speaking in its greatest exaltation, came to us, as we opened the door; again it was succeeded by the triumphant singing.

"They plainly see the *Assyria* burning, from the *Huron*!" the operator said to us. "It's burning above decks in red and yellow flame all abaft the funnels! It's all a sheet of fire except one little part forward. They think from the position that the *Assyria* must have held steam after we ceased to get its signals; but it hasn't steam now. It's drifting; but the wind blowing it back seems to be keeping the space free at the bow where the people must be! The *Huron's* coming on at them full speed with every light going and firing rockets!"

"Our people are getting away from

Austin down there," Kerffers warned me, "or he's letting them go."

The first of them already were upon the steps to the cabin. The stewards, under the direction of some officer, managed to keep the most of them back; but Austin himself, with the woman who had brought us the first alarm, forced his way up and in.

"We have saved them?" she clamored. "We have saved them upon the *Assyria*?"

"The *Huron* is now alongside the *Assyria*!" the "wireless" operator cried. "The first boats from the *Assyria* are sending up the first passengers to the *Huron's* deck. They report everyone can be saved!"

"Everyone can be saved!"

"They're all forward of the fire! It's light as day between the ships! The *Huron's* boats are down and taking people off the *Assyria* safely too!"

"Then everyone is accounted for? Everyone is saved?"

"Everyone is saved!" The "wireless" operator repeated the wonder of it, as he listened. "All are accounted for—safe!"

The woman fell back, faint. The evangelist supported her and held her as his eyes in his final triumph met his friend's, Kerffers.

"All safe, of course!" he cried. "For our beings went forth over the waters when all that men call natural had failed to avail, and we wakened them upon the *Huron* so that they came in time!"

The scientist made no reply. The operator, staring at the evangelist's face, turned in awe and dispatched a message rapidly.

"What are you asking now?" the officer demanded.

"What woke him up? How he happened to come to his key again," the operator replied.

"He says?" Kerffers asked.

"Because I ate those gooseberry tarts at supper! It kept me awake. I couldn't sleep. I felt that I wanted to fix my spark. Fix it right away. Not wait till morning. I went up to the cabin, and—"

# Nature Writ Small

—by—  
OWEN OLIVER

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ILLUSTRATED BY ALEXANDER POPINI

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**T**HE physician had finished his soundings and hisappings and the other tests to try the physical encasement of a man. He leaned back in his chair behind the shaded lamp, and Anstruther leaned forward in the chair that the light fell upon. Perhaps the physician continued his examination even then, for there was an interval before he spoke.

"You write very excellent stories," he remarked at last. "I know them."

"Thank you," Anstruther acknowledged. "But it's rather a question of the author."

The physician nodded. "There's nothing the matter with you," he pronounced. He took up his penholder by the end and wagged it. "If you aren't careful there might be."

Anstruther pushed the lamp aside to face the doctor. "You mean that I overwork?" he suggested.

"No doubt; but it takes a lot of work to hurt a man. I do too much work myself. Most people do, who are any use in the world. It's not a question of quantity but of quality." He paused for a moment. "You don't choose actual people and actual events to write about," he observed.

"I'm not a police-court reporter," Anstruther protested.

"There's very good material in a police-court! Still, you're the best judge. Anyhow, you don't find your material in real life, but in your own mind."

"That's so."

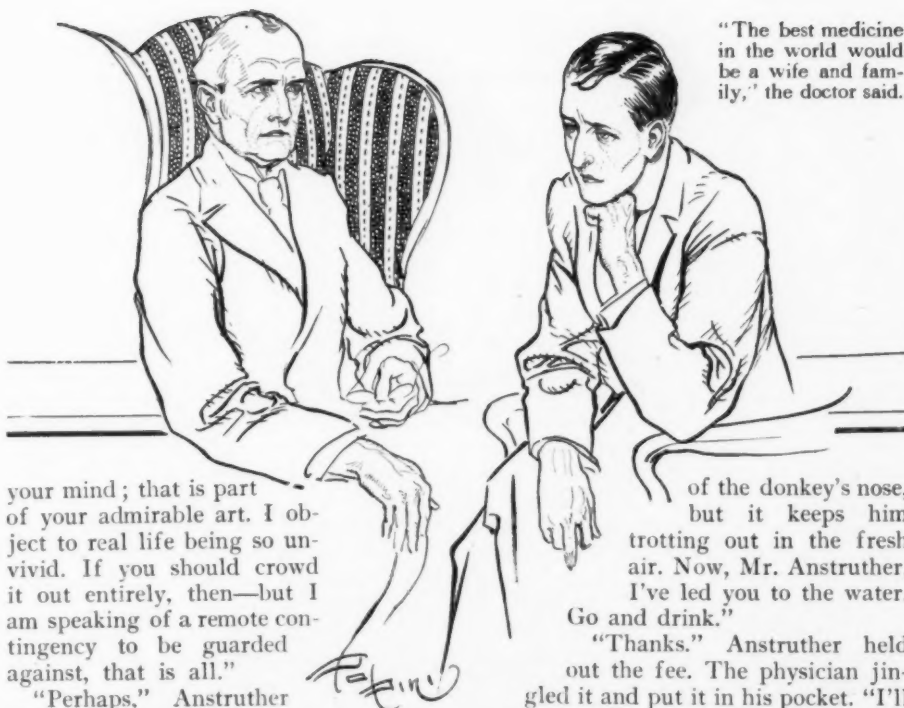
"Having invented your characters, you put them in the lathe of your mind and turn them into such a semblance of reality that you deceive other people. The danger is that you do your work too well—almost well enough to deceive yourself. You are a bachelor, I gather, and you see very little society. The children of your imagination are your daily comrades. Do you follow me?"

"I follow your meaning; but, if you think that I confuse my story-people with those of reality, you're wrong."

"I don't think you do now; but I think it might come to that. I think you have gone so far along the road that you take quite insufficient interest in real people and real life. That is the first step."

"To what?"

"Nervous collapse, or worse—say hallucinations. Suppose, for example, you worked up a particularly interesting story-character to a little more than usual vividness, that this happened at a time when you were run down—as you are—and had even less than your usual interest in actuality, that you didn't sleep very well, and thought your idea over and over till it got on your nerves? We all do that sort of thing sometimes; but real life comes upon us like a blare of trumpets, and scatters the worrying fancies. I am not sure if reality will always blare to you. I don't object to your characters being vividly present to



"The best medicine in the world would be a wife and family," the doctor said.

your mind; that is part of your admirable art. I object to real life being so unvivid. If you should crowd it out entirely, then—but I am speaking of a remote contingency to be guarded against, that is all."

"Perhaps," Anstruther admitted, "I am too much of a recluse, and too absorbed in my stories. I don't want them to be out of touch with real life."

"No," the physician smiled. "But it's rather a question of the author!"

Anstruther laughed suddenly. "I've betrayed myself," he owned. "I see what you mean. I look at everything as a question of stories. Well, what am I to do, doctor?"

"The first thing is to tone up physically. Go to a seaside place, where you have friends. Drench yourself in fresh air and sunshine. When you've recovered enough energy, take plenty of outdoor exercise. Above all, give your imagination a holiday."

"Leave off breathing!" cried Anstruther.

"It isn't so difficult as that. There's no substitute for breath. There's an excellent substitute for imagination. Take an interest in real people; study them, and, if you can, like them—or even hate them! Take an interest in real things. Try golf! You may shrug your shoulders. The ball is only the carrot in front

of the donkey's nose, but it keeps him trotting out in the fresh air. Now, Mr. Anstruther, I've led you to the water.

Go and drink."

"Thanks." Anstruther held out the fee. The physician jingled it and put it in his pocket. "I'll try to drink the medicine."

"The best medicine of all would be a wife and family," the doctor said. "Some real people are very interesting when you understand them. Good-by, and good-luck. I have a kindly feeling for the author who has given me so many pleasant half-hours, you'll understand."

"Good-by!" said Anstruther. "And again, thank you."

They shook hands; and then he went.

He wrote that afternoon to a man named Trefall. He had been Anstruther's first editor, and they had always been friendly, though Trefall was twenty years the older. A few years before, some unexpected casualties had made him heir to an old property in Cornwall. He thought that he had more taste for a country life than for literature. So he had given up his work and settled at Trefall Castle, a place with a history of fifteen hundred years. Anstruther had been there once or twice. He thought that he would rather go to the Trefalls than anywhere else, because they would let him alone. Trefall spent a good deal

of time in his library, the literary habit refusing to be eradicated. Mrs. Trefall was by nature a housewife. Their only daughter was a mouse of a girl, about four and twenty, whose occupation was to play providence to the village. Her father said that she was clever, and she talked too little to disprove the statement. She was a good listener, and supplied Anstruther with the necessary audience.

Trefall answered Anstruther's letter by wire: "Come now. We shall like to have you." Anstruther went. He took some quaint books for Trefall, a novel bread-cutting machine for his wife, and a vanity bag and several Eastern curios for the mouse of a girl. He appreciated his audience; and, so far as he thought upon the subject, he appreciated the atmosphere of goodness that went with her. When he wanted a foil to his neurotic heroines, he put in a good quiet girl on the lines of Myra Trefall.

He was comfortable enough at the Castle; but from the first, some doubt occurred to him whether his environment were not more suited to excite imagination than an interest in reality. It was a romantic place, perched on a romantic cliff at the edge of the sea, and there were wonderful tales about it. Trefall was working at a history of the locality. He overflowed with legend and weird lore that stimulated the imagination of an imaginative writer. Mrs. Trefall overflowed with housewifery, and that did not stimulate Anstruther as a counter-irritant. The mouse-like daughter was very mousy-quiet, and he could not find the cleverness in her. She made no attempt to stimulate his mind, but she showed an active interest in his physical welfare. She took him on her daily tours of beneficence. She offered to take him to see the neighbors, but he did not want society. She proposed to teach him to drive a motor or to sail a boat, but he postponed the learning until he was "fitter." She played him at chess now and then, and lost cheerfully. She beat him shamefully at billiards. In short, she did her kindly best to entertain him, but chiefly he talked and she listened; and when he talked to

her, and when he didn't, his mind was always full of ideas, and the stories that he made of them.

At the moment, his ideas centered round the legends of the Castle. He was particularly fascinated by the local version of the old "Sleeping Beauty" story. There had been, they said, a Trefall maid of old named Moira; and she loved a local Lancelot named and titled Sir Hugh; and he went away to fight giants and dragons and enchanters; and he never came back; and it was said that a wizard had thrown him into a sleep for a thousand years, and half a thousand years. When Moira heard of this, she prayed the local witch to put her into a sleep, too; and the story said that still she lay sleeping, somewhere among the ruins that surrounded the old castle, waiting, like a true-hearted maid, for her lover to come and wake her with his kiss, after the thousand years, and half a thousand years.

"There is a truth in it," Trefall said, "as in all folk lore. The legend is nature writ small. There is a sleeping soul in every woman, and it wakes at the kiss of the right man."

Anstruther worked the legend out in many ways; and, as a writer is apt to do, he used himself for the hero, and found the Sleeping Beauty; and she woke his soul when he woke hers. This was his contribution to the legend. In his world of imagination, he had a soul to wake for love of a woman—though, in his real world, he never looked for her.

At times he remembered the physician's warning, and tried to flee from his imagination; and then he anchored himself to the only reality within reach—the mouse-like girl; with her clear, sweet voice, and her quiet brown eyes, and her charity to all the world around her. He even took an intermittent interest in her poor clients, and sometimes did kindnesses for them; but he always went on to put them into a story.

"I think people are made to help," the girl told him once, "and you think they are made to write about! You will make a pretty story of old Mother Jenkins going shivering because she has given her wrap to cover her daughter's ba-





He came at last to a lofty room, hung with rich tapestry. A couch was in the center of the hall, under a canopy. A sleeping girl lay upon the couch, dressed in robes embroidered with gold. Her face was uncovered and upturned. It was the face of Myra Trefall!

"You are the Knight," she said, "who should go and wake the sleeper."



by. I shall give her a new shawl!"

"No," he said, with a flush. "I will give her the shawl, please. I am like Swift's philosopher, Myra. I want a flapper to rouse my attention. Like your Sleeping Beauty—only nobody wakes me."

The mouse-girl looked up at him with her gentle brown eyes.

"You are the knight," she said, "who should go and wake the sleeper. Perhaps you would get wakened yourself, then?" She laughed softly. Her laugh was rare, but singularly pleasant.

"Yes," he agreed. "I've put that in a story!"

"A story!" she protested, and she

shook her head and laughed again. "Stories wont wake the poor sleeper.

You must go and *find* her and—do you know, old Grandfather Morgan makes out that she sleeps in one of the galleries of the West ruins. He says there is an entrance by the caves under Fell Point, and he got half-way in, when he was a boy, and a dragon or something frightened him nearly out of his life! He has a queer, versified version of the legend, that I like best of all; but Father says it's only thirteenth century and monkish. He has traced Fell Point in an early-Norman Charter, a hundred years before the tower was ruined. So the name has nothing to do with its falling down,



as the verses seem to make out. Anyhow, this comes in old Morgan's doggerel:

Man found woman, and they fell;  
Man lost woman; by this spell,  
He who seeks at place of Fell,  
Wakes with kiss to love him well.

Anstruther's sleepy eyes seemed to wake.

"I'll put that in the story!" he declared delightedly.

"Oh!" cried the girl, with a sad little laugh. "Your stories! Well, I must go and dress for dinner. Good-by, man of dreams!"

She ran indoors and left him pacing the edge of the cliff. It was seven on a late October night, and a full moon was shining, and Fell Point looked as it had looked in the days when knights rode through the land, with ladies' gages in their helmets. He walked up and down, thinking over his story; and presently he walked toward the ruined West Tower, taking the lower path, which led to the caves underneath. The moonlight glinted from the white boulders that were strewn along the cliff-side. His imagination easily turned them into shapes—now the form of Moira, who flitted from cave to cave, robed in clinging white, now the tall form of a lover who followed her in shining silver armor. Gaunt rocks in the shadow made dragons and giants and enchanters. He would go right down into a cave, he decided, and catch more "local color" for the great story.

He chose a cave with a large entrance that simulated an ancient archway. The light wind played upon it and made a faint, dreamy music within—the music, he fancied, of the bards who played on their harps, when Moira was laid ceremoniously to her long rest, "dight in broidery of gold, with her fayre face only uncovered," that the knight who had waited a thousand years and half a thousand years to see it should not wait a second longer.

There was a semi-circle of moonlit rock under the arch. Beyond this, the darkness stood like a wall. Anstruther went in two steps beyond the moonlight; at the second, he slipped and fell. His head struck something. . . .

A light grew out of the sides of the cave; and he saw it all like a great, bare hall. There was a door at the far end; and he rose—so he believed—and went on.

The door opened at his touch, and he found himself in a long passage covered with hangings worked with the needle, and lighted with brazen lamps. The passage led to others, and here and there they opened into halls; and in some of these, retainers sat asleep on oaken benches, with sleeping dogs at their feet. A silken thread lay along the way, and he took this to be the clue that led the true knight to his true lady, and followed it.

He came at last to a lofty room, hung with rich tapestry, and with thick carpets on the floor. Presently he saw that much of the thickness was dust; and that cobwebs overhung the hangings of the walls. A couch was in the center of the hall, under a canopy. Cobwebs overhung this, too, and reached down to the floor like transparent curtains. They were so strong that he could not part them, but he could see through.

A sleeping girl lay upon the couch, dressed in robes embroidered with gold. Her face was uncovered and upturned. It was the face of Myra Trefall!

It seemed to him strange at first that this heroine of mighty legend should have just the quiet, pensive face of the mouse-girl—the same faint trace of a smile; but when he thought of what beauties he would have desired to find, he could think of no face that he would have liked so well. Since he was the knight to wake her, he was glad that she was like Myra—so marvelously like that it might be Myra sleeping there. Yet, it was not so wonderful after all. Who should be like the lady who was true and good but Myra, the sweetest maid that he had met outside his stories? Yes. He was glad that Moira looked like her; and he had no fear to wake her, or that his soul would fail to wake with her soul.

He seized the cobweb curtains, but he could not rend them—struggled with them for a long, long time. They were hard, like wires, and cut his hands; and

yet inside they looked so easy to part, if the sleeper would wake and part them; and presently he called to her.

"Myra!" he cried—he had forgotten that this was Moira—"Myra!"

The girl opened her eyes—Myra's soft brown eyes—and smiled at him; she raised herself on one elbow, put out the other hand—a slender white hand like Myra's—and touched the curtains. They fell apart; and he knelt and pressed his lips to hers, and then. . . .

He found himself facing the moonlit sea at the mouth of the cave with an entrance like an arch; and on his lips there was the memory of a kiss. He was borne in some one's arms; and some one staggered. He looked up and saw Myra's face. He had known before he looked whose face he would see. Her lips quivered; and running down one cheek there was a little tear. When he opened his eyes, she gave a cry, staggered to a boulder outside the cave and put him down upon it. She stood beside him and wiped her eyes hastily and tried to laugh.

"I was afraid you were badly hurt," she said, in her usual quiet voice, "but I think you have only knocked your

head. When you did not come to dinner I knew you would be here looking for— for a story. Did you find it?" She tried again to laugh. "I was rather unnerved," she confessed. "I thought you were killed, and it was your ghost that called."

"Did I call?" he asked.

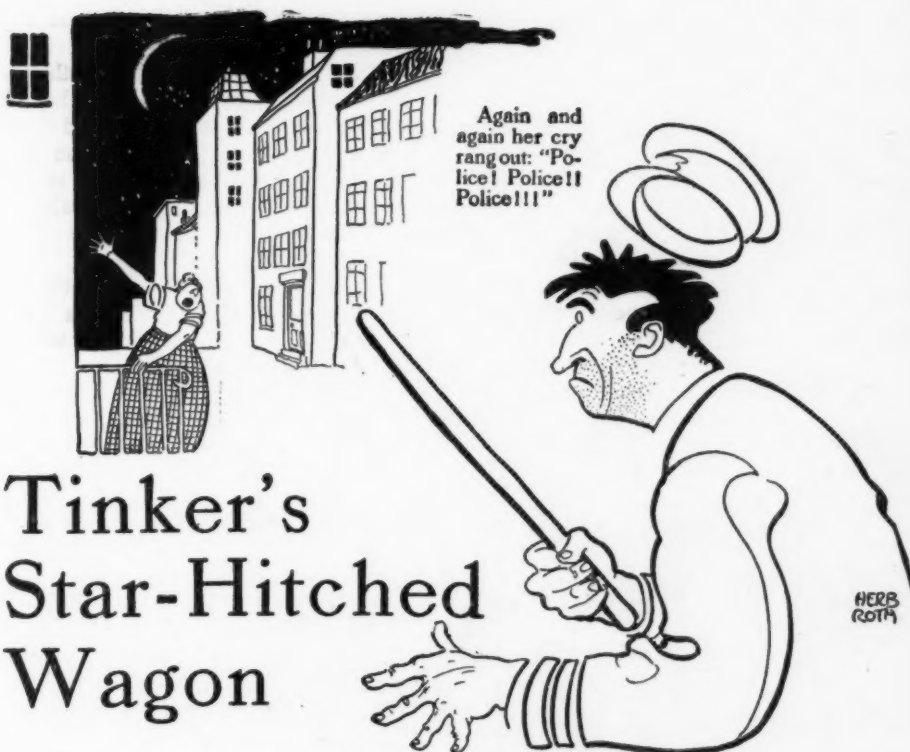
"Yes," she told him. "If you hadn't, I must have gone for a lantern. You were right inside in the dark. I had to grope about. —Do you know, it is the cave that Grandfather Morgan means. Did you find her?"

He staggered to his feet and passed his hand over his head. The hair was matted in one place with blood. He stared and stared at the mouse-like girl as she stood in the moonlight with her back to the rock. His mind had always known that, to him, she was the sweetest woman in the world; and now his heart knew.

"Did you find her?" she repeated. She tried to speak lightly; but she clasped and unclasped her hands.

"Tell me, dear?" he said, and took her face in his hands. She closed her eyes shyly, and he seemed to look upon the face of the Sleeping Beauty. When he kissed it, the eyes opened and smiled.





# Tinker's Star-Hitched Wagon

by CHARLES R. BARNES

Author of "Mrs. Sweeney," etc.

I L L U S T R A T E D   B Y   H E R B   R O T H

**H**ITCHING one's wagon to a star is a very good thing to do, sometimes. But when the star is a student of psychology, like city magistrate Doonan; and when the man with the wagon to hitch is a uniformed officer, such a person as William Tinker; and when there is a lady of Mrs. Mary Fogarty's caliber to be reckoned with—then perhaps it might be just as well to stop and think a while before hooking up the tugs and making ready to say, "Get ap!"

Doonan was a man of soft heart, a forceful personality and a voice that was easy to listen to. He held a theory that a man was almost always better off out of jail than in. And, whenever he found

it possible to head an aspirant for a jail record away from the bars, he did so. However, there was not much of sentiment in Doonan. Rather he was a practical person. If he could convince himself that Mike Rafferty, up for petty theft, would mend his ways and be a good citizen, Mike would leave the court room under a suspended sentence. On the other hand, if magistrate Doonan doubted Mike's susceptibility to the appeal of decency, then the Island became additionally populated.

Officer William Tinker had often borne witness against offenders in Doonan's court room. He had plainly stated and proved charges. And he had almost as often seen his victim depart in peace.

He had marveled at that; and he had marveled the more because he seldom saw that same face in the court room again. Magistrate Doonan seemed to have a mysterious power over other men. Officer William Tinker puzzled his head about it for almost a year before he learned the secret of it. One morning he mounted the bridge to explain why one Ole Knutsen should be severely punished for beating his wife. The wife, a plain, stooped little woman, with discolored eyes and a nose bulbous from contact with Ole's fist, stood by, a witness from whom words were unnecessary. The magistrate glanced quickly but comprehensively at the big Swede, and from him to the long suffering woman. Then he said:

"Knutsen, give me your hand." He snapped his fingers sharply, and grasped the large, calloused palm that slowly went over the desk toward him. "Now, Knutsen," he continued, "I'm your friend. Understand?"

A slow grin came over the man's face as he gradually understood the gleam of honest friendliness in the magistrate's eyes.

"Aye tank so," he answered.

"Then," the judge went on, "you're going to do as I say. Your wife is a fine woman, Knutsen, a fine woman. You're not going to beat her any more. No more, Knutsen! You're a big man, a strong man, a good man. You will be good to her, after this. You won't beat her again. This is the last time, Knutsen!"

The Swede wrestled with the idea. Presently he seemed to understand and he grinned again. Doonan continued to talk in the same strain, firmly impressing the prisoner with the notion that, hereafter, the little bruised woman was to receive only the most gentlemanly and courteous treatment at his hands. And, at the end of the interview, the big laborer departed, declaring to the court:

"Yudge, das ban purty fine t'ang you say. Aye lak you!" He carefully escorted his wife out; and Doonan smiled contentedly, for he felt certain that the sledge hammer fist would not be raised against the woman again.

Officer William Tinker learned that day from a reporter the secret of the magistrate's power.

"It's suggestion," explained the scribe. "Doonan makes 'em believe they don't want to be bad any more. And they believe it, Tinker, just like you believe you ought to pinch a fellow if you catch him stealing. You heard him talk?"

Tinker nodded affirmatively. The reporter went on:

"That Swede is half hypnotized, you might say. He's got the idea that he doesn't want to beat up his wife. He thinks she's the finest woman in the world and he'll treat her like a queen if the judge's talk took right. If he could only do that kind of thing to everybody that comes here, there wouldn't be any more criminals. But it only goes with a certain per cent of the people."

Officer Tinker gave that explanation a great deal of thought. He was a big, bluff, hearty man, who would have made friends easier if he had not taken everything so seriously. There was much of character to him; and it is not at all surprising that he soon found himself capable of repeating magistrate Doonan's suggestive performances in a small way. His first subject was the waitress who served him with his suppers in a little restaurant near the station house. She gave over going to dances in a beery hall, because William Tinker succeeded in convincing her that she did not want to go.

At this point, Mrs. Mary Fogarty came in to be reckoned with—Mrs. Fogarty and her boarder, Louis Schultz. The good woman was janitress of an apartment house that lay along officer Tinker's post. She was of average pulchritude, if there be such a state; and she had two little children and a loud, continuous voice. In the matter of age, she ran a close second to the policeman, having scored about twenty-eight to his thirty years.

Tinker was pacing his beat about eight o'clock of a June evening, when Mrs. Fogarty's voice began to bother him. He was walking reflectively along, turning over in his mind the practical benefits



of mental suggestion, as he had practiced it on the waitress. It was a question whether the girl wouldn't be happier spieeling in the beery hall than sitting all alone in her dowdy room, as she had told him she did, these hypnotic evenings. Yes, he had a problem on his mind, did Tinker: and Mrs. Fogarty's voice, rising shrilly on the soft, summer air, was an aggravation. For she was yelling at top-tone:

"Police!"

William Tinker instinctively looked about him for a place wherein to vanish. He wanted to think out the matter of

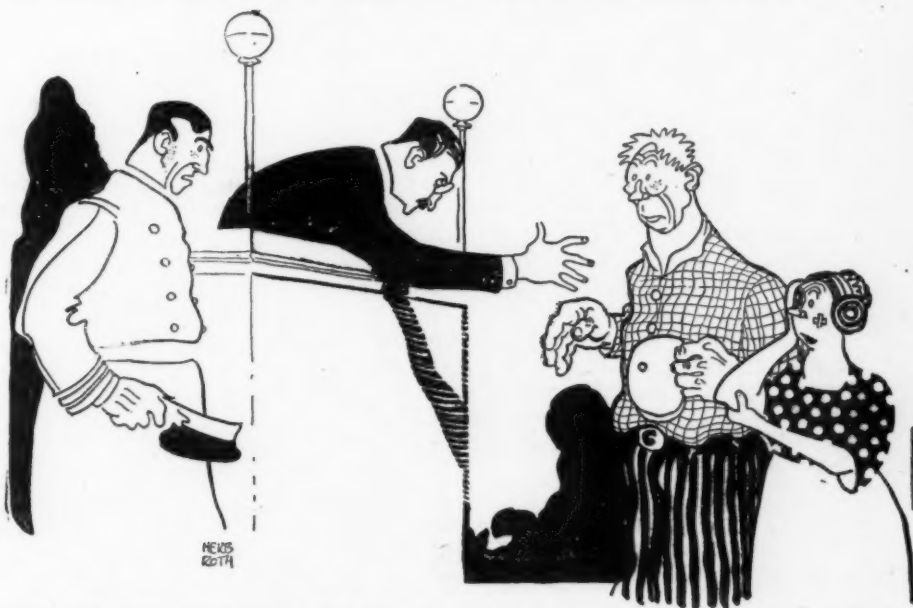
"Aw, shut up!"

Mrs. Fogarty compromised. She lowered her tone.

"I aint startin' nothin' for the fun of it," she apologetically explained. "Mr. Schultz is going to hang hisself. There's lots of folks that hollers police for less!"

"They do, ma'am," agreed Tinker. "Sometimes they holler about nothin' at all. Now, what's all this about the Schultz party?"

The lady was growing nervous. Seizing the officer's arm, she began to move toward the basement of a near-by apartment house, urging him along.



The magistrate glanced quickly, but comprehensively at the big Swede and from him to the long-suffering woman. Then he said: "Knutsen, give me your hand."

the waitress. Besides, almost any policeman is better off away from sources of trouble. But one swift, circular glance showed the futility of shirking. All about him, on both sides of the street, were the solid fronts of apartment buildings. A street lamp blazed disconcertingly from a very near corner; and Mrs. Fogarty, bareheaded and shrieking, was scarcely a hundred yards in front of him. Again and again her cry rang out:

"Police—police—police!"

Officer Tinker sprinted up to her and muttered:

"Git that rope away from him," she pleaded, "and I'll tell you. Don't let him kill hisself. If he does, I'll lose my board money, that he pays so prompt every Saturday, to say nothin' of my chance for marryin' again. Hurry, Mister, before he goes and does it!"

She led the way down into her basement, the policeman following. Once inside, she proceeded along a dark passage, past the furnace and the water heater and the dumb waiters, to that part of the place which was set aside for the use of the building's custodian. Entering

her sitting room, she stooped and pointed toward an inner door.

"Looie is in there," she whispered.

"Looie?" questioned Officer Tinker.

"Yes, Looie—Looie Schultz. Quick, get the rope away from him!"

Tinker strode to the door, turned the knob and entered. At a table sat a man, writing. At the policeman's appearance, he looked up. His face was wide across at the cheek bones, tapering downward to a pointed chin. His eyes were light blue and irresolute. A mop of yellow hair crowned his head; a thin yellow moustache straggled across his lip. From the gas fixture above the table hung a stout rope with a noose at the end. Officer Tinker shouted:

"Hey, you!"

Then he sprang forward, bore the yellow headed one to the floor and cried to Mrs. Fogarty, who stood in the doorway:

"Undo that there rope from the gas pipe and give it to me."

Mrs. Fogarty obeyed orders and in another minute Louis Schultz lay quite still on the floor, securely bound, hand and foot. His landlady fell to sobbing.

"I wisht," she said to the officer, who had arisen to his feet and was brushing dust from his clothes, "I wisht you wouldn't of been so rough with him."

Mr. Tinker did not excuse himself. Instead, he stepped outside, pushing Mrs. Fogarty before him, and closed the door.

"Say," he began, "what was he goin' to dump hisself off that way for?"



Tinker sprang forward, bore the yellow-haired one to the floor, and cried to Mrs. Fogarty, who stood in the doorway: "Undo that there rope from the gas pipe and give it to me."

"He was jealous," came the explanation. "He was jealous, and nothin' else. Them Germans is a awful melancholy bunch, Mister."

"What was he jealous of?"

"Me."

"You?"

"Yes, sir. You see, him and me was engaged to be married. He's been livin' here about a year, payin' me five dollars a week for board and room. We got to likin' each other; and about a month ago, he

asked me would I marry him. I said, yes, I would, seein' that he's got a pretty payin' trade as a carpenter. Then, along comes that lovely ice man."

Officer Tinker looked at her.

"What's the ice man got to do with it?" he presently asked.

Mrs. Fogarty dropped her eyes.

"He's got a lot to do with it," she explained, in a low voice. "He's a fine man, and he took a shine to me. And Looie comes home this evenin' and finds him in my settin' room, talkin'. He got jealous and went to his room. Then, when the ice man goes away, Looie calls me in, shows me the rope and says he's goin' to end it all—yes, sir, end it all, is them very words he used! He was writin' a letter home to his folks in Cincinnati when you started that rough stuff with him."

Again Officer Tinker pondered. After a moment, he jerked his thumb toward the closed door.

"Which one," he asked, "are you after—the Dutchman or the ice man?"

The woman appeared undecided.

"Mr. Schultz," said she, reflectively, "is a fine, steady man and he's always



got work. He'd be a good provider. But that ice man—well, he sure has a way with him!"

"That," commented Mr. Tinker, "is women for you! Both ends against the middle. Can't you choose between them two parties?"

"I guess I could," Mrs. Fogarty told him, "if I knowed the ice man's sentiments. But he aint so awful talkative about committin' hisself."

"You'd pass up that there Schultz?"

"Uh-huh."

"You don't want him to be botherin' you?"



"You've been through some trouble," said Tinker, "but everything's going to be all right, now. You're a big fine looking man, and you aint going to let a little thing like being jealous bust up your whole life. Take it from me, the women aint worth it."

"No. Him and his rope is somethin' that gets on a lady's nerves."

"I see." The policeman indulged in brief cogitation. "You'd kind of like to feel free for a little while. You'd like it better if this here Schultz party kept hisself in the background, as you might say, till you get a line on the ice man. Is that right?"

Mrs. Fogarty admitted that such was her state of mind.

"Men is awful when they're jealous," she observed.

Tinker placed a big hand on the door knob.

"Mebby I can fix matters for you so's you wont be bothered no more like you've been. He looks like a good subject." Without further words, he opened the door and passed in, trailed by Mrs. Fogarty, whose eyes held a scared look. Bending over the trussed boarder, he loosed the rope and bade the man get to his feet. Then he held out his hand, which was hesitatingly taken by the would-be suicide.

"Looie," began Mr. Tinker, "I'm your friend. Get that?"

Schultz appeared doubtful.

"You got a funny way of showing it,"

he argued. "I bet I got a good big bump on the back of my head, now, from being slammed down by you."

"That's all right," said the officer. "That's all right. I saved your life. I'm your friend, see?"

It was a moment before Mr. Schultz would admit the possibility of such a relation existing between him and the man of the law; but finally he gave an affirmative nod. Tinker talked on.

"You've been through some trouble, Schultz," he said, "but every-

thing's going to be all right, now. Listen: you're a big, fine looking man and you aint going to let a little thing like being jealous about a woman bust up your whole life. You aint going to do nothing like that, Schultz. Take it from me, the women aint worth it." He turned toward Mrs. Fogarty and the German's gaze followed. The good woman's face was beginning to show something like indignation. Mr. Tinker talked on, crooningly.

"Schultz, lots of men make the same mistake you made. They want to go and end it all when some lady treats 'em mean. But you aint one of the kind that

has to stand for such treatment. You're a fine looking man—why, you could get any girl you wanted, Schultz! And look what you're startin' all this rough business about. Look at the lady, Schultz. Look at her! She aint so much! There's thousands of better lookers than she is, right here in this town—thousands of 'em that would run their legs off chasing you, if you'd only say the word. You and me, Schultz, wouldn't kill ourselves for her. No, take it from me, we wouldn't."

He paused and there was something like triumph in his gaze, as it rested on his "subject." For Mr. Schultz was critically appraising his landlady; and there was doubt in his expression. Mrs. Fogarty's chin went into the air.

"Believe me," she exclaimed, "I never seen such a insultin' man. What's the matter of me and my looks, I'd like to know?"

The officer raised his hand for silence.

"Schultz," he declared, "you're all over bein' stuck on this here party. You like her as a friend, but you don't love her so much that you'd kill yourself for her. Take it from me, to-morrow you're going to hunt up the classiest dame in this neighborhood and show the public what you can do when you really go in for the ladies. You get me, Schultz?"

The man gave one more glance at Mrs. Fogarty and then his eyes sought the floor.

"I never thought of it that way before," he muttered.

"Of course you didn't," agreed Tinker. "If you had, you'd never tied that rope to the gas pipe. You're all right, Schultz. You're going to get a good night's sleep and think different in the morning. Then, some night, you're going to a swell dance, somewhere, and cop out the best looking skirt on the floor. You'll see what you've been missing, all this time. You're a lady killer, Schultz. And as soon as you get your bearings, you'll have the neighbors all talking about the way you make 'em chase after you, Schultz, and the young fellows all jealous. You're all over being crazy about this lady here, friend. You've got to forget her, now, and take on a new one.

And you're sure going to do what I say. Get me? You're going to do it, Schultz."

A smile flitted into the blue eyes of the erstwhile despondent one.

"Say," he exclaimed, "why didn't I never meet you before!" He looked at Mrs. Fogarty as at a mere acquaintance. "Mr. Policeman," he declared, "you was right about it—you're my friend. If it hadn't been for you, see what I would of done!" As he failed to specify suicide or matrimony, Mr. Tinker was left to draw his own conclusions.

Mrs. Fogarty, red faced and highly indignant, faced the officer as he started to leave.

"You old knocker!" was all she said. Mr. Tinker paid small heed to her.

"It worked," he mused, as he found his way to the street, "and I guess the magistrate aint got so much on me, even if I am only a plain cop. And come to think about it, I don't see no reason why a feller couldn't use that there suggestion to boost hisself into a blame good place in the department."

## II

A few evenings later, Officer Tinker was pacing his post; and it was near seven o'clock in the evening. He paused near a street light and twirled his night stick around and around. His experiment on Mr. Schultz seemed to be a success. The day before, he had met the fellow in the subway, accompanied by a very pretty girl. Mr. Schultz had bowed and smiled—and had blushed. Tinker saw that his talk had, at least, switched attention from Mrs. Fogarty. And he was pleased to realize his wonderful power over another. So, this evening he twirled his nightstick and whistled a bit.

Three people were approaching from the up-town direction. As they drew nearer, Mr. Tinker saw that the trio consisted of two girls and a man. And the man, moreover, was Schultz. He spoke cordially to the officer.

"I aint livin' in the old place any more," he hurriedly said, as he passed. "Tell you about it, some time."

Mr. Tinker contented himself with

nodding. He liked the happy expression on the face of Schultz; and he admired the man's taste in selecting his company. The two girls were fine looking—there was no doubt of that—and so was the one who had been in the subway. Schultz was doing well. Mr. Tinker felt quite contented that night, during his watch. Moreover, he found himself giving much attention to a slowly forming plan, by which he hoped to suggest himself to a better place, high up in the police department.

He saw more of Mr. Schultz the next evening. The man came hurrying along, but when he saw Tinker, he stopped.

"Say," he began, "I wisht I'd met you a long time ago."

"Why's that?" asked Tinker.

"Because I'm havin' a swell time, these days. You ought to see the s'ciety I'm travelin' in. I quit the old lady."

"The old lady?"

"Mrs. Fogarty. She was an awful lemon. I didn't use to think so, but I seem to of woke up. I cut her out. Did you see them dames that was with me last night and that there other one in the subway?"

Tinker nodded.

"The first one," Schultz explained, "was a lady I bought a pair of socks off of in a store. She was tellin' me she was lonesome, so I asked her to go out to dinner and she says all right. We set in at a swell table de hote that cost forty cents a plate—and I'm strong with her. Honest, I never knowed I was such a mixer."

"Oh," said Mr. Tinker, "you're all right."

"Sure I am," admitted Mr. Schultz. "There aint nothing the matter of me,

when it comes to bein' a lady's man! Last night I got them two you seen me with out of the boarding house where I'm livin' now. We went to a pitcher show; and they interduced me to a blonde that's almost as pretty as them ladies on the brewery calendars. She's goin' with me to the pitcher show to-night. Say, I never knowed it was in me to be such a s'ciety man!"

"I told you that you was the goods," reminded Mr. Tinker.

Schultz was inclined to be modest.

"Oh," he remarked, "I aint quite so classy as that. But I tell you this much: I been lookin' in the glass and there aint many parties in this town that's much handsomer than me. And I guess I got a way with me, too, for all them ladies seem to take to me."

"How do you manage it?" Tinker asked.

"Huh," Shultz told him. "I just butt in. You wouldn't believe, now, how them ladies admire a man with nerve. I says last night to the lady I met. 'Kid,' I says, 'it's the pitcher show for ours t'-morrh night.' I says it real bold, like there aint any other answer but yes. She says 'All right.' But I knowed she'd say so, for I aint a party to be passed up in a hurry by no girl. I wisht I'd found out

b'fore that there was so much class to me. Who said marry Mrs. Fogarty? Huh, if I aint good enough to hook up with somethin' on Fifth Avenue, I'd like to have somebody come round and map it out why I aint!"

Officer Tinker nodded gravely, gasping just a trifle before doing so. He had intended to implant in Looie the idea that matrimony a shade or so above the



"I tell you this much," said Schultz: "I been lookin' in the glass and there aint many parties in this town that's much handsomer than me."

class of Mrs. Fogarty was a possibility. His suggestion had taken hold with much more vigor, it appeared. The officer, as he walked away on his beat, reviewed the colossal conceit he had engendered and resolved to be more careful in the future. Suppose, now, that, under treatment, a discouraged dog-catcher should believe himself to be a lion tamer! Mr. Tinker realized that complications could come out of this suggestion business.

He passed slowly along his post; and presently he found himself near the apartment house over the subterranean destinies of which Mrs. Fogarty presided. As he came to the basement entrance, that lady emerged with a tin pail in her hand. Mr. Tinker pleasantly saluted her.

"Was you chasin' out for a growler?" he inquired.

Mrs. Fogarty stopped short as she recognized him.

"So, it's you!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, mom," he answered.

She stooped, caught a corner of her apron in her hand and pressed it to her eyes.

"Oh, my Gawd!" she wailed.

"What's the matter now?" questioned the policeman.

"Matter!" she sobbed, "everything's the matter! There aint no good in nothing, no more, since you come along and ruint my life for me. Oh, aint you the heartless thing, though!"

Tinker stared.

"What's all this you're sayin'?" he demanded.

Mrs. Fogarty sobbed dismally.

"Men is the cause of all the trouble us ladies has got," she declared. "You done somethin' that can't be undid. My life's ruint!"

"Go on!" ejaculated Officer Tinker. "I mean it. The best I get now is to be janitor here all my life. You was the cruelest party I ever seen!"

"Me?"

"Yes, you."

"How's that?"

"You went and chased Looie Schultz away from me and him all ready to marry me. That's what you done!" Mrs. Fogarty wept fluently. The policeman tapped his leg with his nightstick.

"Well," he inquired, "how about the ice man?"

The lady was quick to explain.

"Him?" she sobbed. "He's gone, too."



"Matter!" she sobbed, "everything's the matter. There aint no good in nothing, no more, since you come along and ruint my life for me. Oh, aint you the heartless thing though!"

Looie met him and told him he'd quit bein' engaged to me. And the ice man figgered that if a little blonde Dutchman couldn't stand for me, there was somethin' wrong with my disposition, or somethin'. Anyway, he's quit callin'. I tell you, Mister, you've went and did me a dirty trick!"

Mr. Tinker began to think. Suddenly, however, he was brought face to face with something he had not expected. Mrs. Fogarty let her little tin pail drop with a clatter. She straightened herself, faced the man squarely and demanded:

"What are you going to do about it?"



Tinker was astounded.

"Me?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, you. It was you that went and chased my steady away from me. You brought on all my trouble. Aint you goin' to make good?"

The man stared dumbly.

"Make good?" he at length mumbled.

"I said just that," Mrs. Fogarty told him. "Aint you got no honor about you? When a party does another party a low trick and aint got it in for the other party, he goes and makes good if he's a gent'm'n. If he aint, then he sneaks away like a yellow pup."

"What you gettin' at?" Tinker wanted to know. There was fright in his eyes.

"I'm gettin' at this," Mrs. Fogarty advised him. "If you was a man—a real man—you'd say to me: 'Lady,' you'd say, 'seein' that I've went and chased your feller away, and seein' I'm sorry about it,' you'd say, 'I'll offer myself in his place, so's there'll be no harm did. Come on and marry me,' you'd say, 'and I'll take you out of that there janitor's job. My salary as a cop,' you'd say, 'is plenty for two to live on comfort'ble,' you'd say." She paused, looking him full in the eyes. For a moment he gazed, wide eyed. Then he muttered:

"Good Lord!"

Mrs. Fogarty was quick with speech.

"That's just the way with you men," she snapped. "You go and make ladies unhappy and then try to crawl out of it. But, this time, you're dealin' with a woman that knows her rights. This here case is goin' to be took up to headquarters. If you aint willin' to set things right, I'll see that the captain finds out how you come in ladies' houses, separate lovin' couples and all that there kind of dirty work. I guess when the big boss knows how you've shooed Looie away from me, he'll have somethin' to say. I guess he will!"

Officer Tinker knew from experience that an irate individual, and especially a female individual, can bring considerable worry and woe upon the head of an officer, once a start, with half a case behind it, is made. He could picture Mrs. Fogarty bouncing in upon the precinct captain with her story. And, as he had failed to arrest Looie Schultz on a charge of attempted suicide, as provided under the law of New York state, he saw good cause for maintaining at least a temporary peace. So he hesitated—and was lost.

"Lady," he said, "this here idee you're springin' on me is so darn sudden that I wisht you'd give me time to think about it. I sure am sorry to hear I've done you such a low trick. And there aint no man on the force that can stand up and say I aint no gent."

"I knew you was a gent," Mrs. Fogarty agreed, "the first time I ever seen you."

Mr. Tinker bowed gallantly.

"Thanks," he said. "Now, I tell you what I'll do. I got to get on the job, tonight, but to-morrow afternoon, I'm off. I'll call round to your place and we'll talk it over."

"And go to a pitcher show," suggested Mrs. Fogarty, by way of injecting an element of sociability into an approaching situation that might be purely argumentative.

### III

Officer Tinker has paid the fifth installment on the furniture. Mrs. Fogarty-Tinker is a good housekeeper; he can say that much for her. But every time he stands up as complaining witness in Magistrate Doonan's court room, and listens while the man of law forces suggestion into the mental receptacles of the criminal class, he sighs.

# HIS HOUSE IN ORDER

by

MINNIE  
BARBOUR  
ADAMS



**W**ELL, old Hop-and-go-fetch-it, you took your own time getting here, didn't you?" growled the man on the bed.

The doctor dropped his case into a chair, tumbled his hat off onto it, and seized his patient's wrist. A moment's thoughtful count, and he laid the hand very gently back upon the bed and placed his ear above the laboring heart.

"Sph! Sph! Get your wool out of my mouth, you confounded old—old stiff!" spluttered the sick man.

Doctor Dibble straightened up and limped to the chair on which he had set his medicine case. "If I was as near being one as you are, Pete Ormsby, I wouldn't call names," he blustered fiercely, though the eyes that tried to read the labels were dim.

"You don't mean—" began the patient in an awed voice.

"I just do!"

"But I've been as bad—worse, before," argued the other, almost piteously.

"Not like this. Now, don't argufy with me, but take your quietus like the level headed old duffer that you've always been." He towered over his friend, his hands behind his back, his grizzled brows bristling in a frown.

"A consultation—you wouldn't advise—"

"No!" thundered the doctor. "What does that tailor's mannikin know about a case like this. Still—"

"No, it would be no use," Ormsby ac-

quiesced. The first shock over, he was as calm as the doctor was. "How long will you give me, Doc?"

"Till to-morrow morning; to-morrow night, at the farthest."

"Why, see here, you woolly old ruffian," complained Ormsby, "that's too short: I've got lots to do: I—"

"That's right; blame it onto me, Pete," the doctor retorted sarcastically. "I suppose, if you were up, you would threaten to take it out of my hide."

"As I've done on occasions, if you'll remember," chuckled the sick man. "Well." He extended his hand.

"Which means to run along—for good and all, as far as you're concerned," interpreted the doctor. He tried to smile, to maintain to the end the bravado that had helped them both thus far.

"Yes. But what about our game of chess, Doc?" He started up.

"I—I'll leave it set up just as it is," the doctor said brokenly, pushing his friend back among the pillows. "I—oh!—maybe we can finish it some day, Pete."

"I hope so, Doc." The hands of the two men met.

"Anything I can do for you?" the doctor asked as he limped toward the door. "Send Bert and Alice to you?"

"Not yet. But I hear Amos mowing in the next yard. Tell him to drop in and smooth things up for me a bit."

"All right. Well, good luck to ye, old boy." And the doctor limped blindly out of the room.



"Hi there, Amos!" he called from the porch.

From where he was lying, Ormsby could see the tall, clerical form of their boyhood friend bent undignifiedly over a lawn mower.

"What d'ye want?" he demanded, dropping a bandanna from his straw hat into his hot, wet hands.

"Pete's leaving us." The doctor's voice was casual for the benefit of the man on the bed. "And he thought if you could say a good word or two for him—"

"Not dying?" gasped the minister.

"Uh huh!"

Ormsby caught a glimpse of the minister's long legs as he vaulted the low hedge.

"Oh, by the way, Pete." The doctor's deprecating voice drifted in through the window.

"Yes."

"My—ah!—little bill?"

"Charge it to the town pump, you old skinflint!" Ormsby advised, smiling to himself. Good old Doc.! He wasn't in the least deceived by his brusqueness. They had talked many times of dying and had agreed that when the time came they wanted to part as calmly as they would for the night. No fuss; no emotion. But Doc. was going to miss him, for all of that— The preacher came in.

"Hold on there, Amos!" Ormsby cried sharply. "Grin before you come a step farther!"

"Grin?" Amos paused in shocked surprise.

"Yes, *grin!* This aint no funeral—yet."

The lines of weariness and discouragement on the preacher's old face softened into a smile. "If they could all go like this," he said wistfully, sitting down by the bed.

"Then you believe—"

"Yes, I believe that it is well with you, Peter."

It *was* "well with him," Ormsby decided when, some time after midnight, he awakened from a restful sleep. At first he could not recall what it was hanging over him. Some of them sick? Some business trouble? Some—ah! he remembered now! He was dying! The

shock of it nearly unnerved him. Dying!

"Oh, God! I don't want to die!" he moaned. "I'm only sixty-eight; I still have lots to do. There must be some way—"

The perspiration oozed from every pore and the hot tears flooded his eyes; but the momentary rebellion passed. God knew best, he thought resignedly. It might be better for him to go now while he was still strong mentally, while he still had the love and respect of his family and the community, than to wait till he was a doddering old idiot whose death would be unmentioned. There was old Herrick, for instance. A long life of usefulness overshadowed by the silly antics of second childhood. Writing love-letters to the girls, indeed! Bah!

Yes, he was ready to go; but how about his family? And Doc.? And Amos? Amos had known for years that his will held something pretty good for him and that ramshackle old church of his; but, just the same, his grief at parting had been genuine. Oh, they were all going to miss him a lot.

Amos had brought Bert and Alice in before he went, and told them. Poor Alice! How heartbroken she had been. He loved Alice just as well, maybe a little better, than he did Bert; for, wasn't love and respect his due from his only son? That of his daughter-in-law was voluntary. They were going to be a surprised pair, those two. He had always done well by them—paid Bert a good salary and given him this house rent free; but just wait till those books on that table over there told their little story. He had had Bert bring them from the office that evening and had run over them himself to see that all was correct. Bert had no idea how rich he was, for he'd always kept his business pretty well to himself. He wished now that he had taken the boy a little more into his confidence. He would have been better able to go on with the business. Still, Bert was smart, mighty smart, and he'd soon pick it up.

They were going to spend more than they did now, he was afraid; but let 'em do it. It would be theirs to do with as they saw fit; and, too, it would help 'em

to bear losing him. He could still see the look on Paul's face when they told him. Paul was a fine boy, nearly as tall as his granddad, though only nineteen years old; and uncommonly grave and studious. Too much so. And pretty, seventeen-year-old Rose. He didn't like to remember her grief. The twins, Lucien and Lucille, had not been told; plenty of time for that when the end was near.

Was the end near? he wondered shrinkingly. All his gaunt length beneath the covers felt cold and numb, though his mind was preternaturally clear. He felt sure he could not move or lift his heavy hands from his sides. It must be death stealing over him. There was something he was to take—he'd call Bert—if he could. But what was the boy doing? What was that sound?

A horrible suspicion sent a shock of life through his whole body. It was his private ledger! He would have known the sound anywhere. And Bert, his boy, was going through it! Couldn't wait till he was gone to see how much he was worth. Oh, it was awful, unbelievable! Still, he'd make sure.

Slowly, he raised on one elbow, anger and grief giving him strength. Slowly, he drew himself to a sitting posture. He must be careful or that treacherous old heart would pop and then he'd never know. Forward a little, and Bert came within his range of vision from behind the screen that had been placed around the light. He had the book and was transcribing figures from it to a sheet of paper at its side. The old man groaned in anguish. All the love and trust of years seemed to melt away at sight of his son's greying head bent above the book.

"Couldn't wait till to-morrow!" His voice was so cold and sneering that it shocked him. The book closed with a snap, and Bert sprang to his feet. Even then, fear for the sick man came before shame for himself.

"Lie down! Oh, Father, lie down!" he begged fearfully, his hands on his father's shoulders.

"Let me alone!" the old man ordered sharply. "Better die now than to have time to think of it!"

"Lie down, Father, and then we'll

talk about it." There was utter despair in the younger man's voice. It touched his father, who allowed himself to be laid gently back on the bed.

"Oh, Bert! Couldn't you wait?" he asked brokenly. "Was you so anxious to see what I had?"

Bert locked his hands behind his back and, with his lips shut hard, regarded his father for some time.

Ormsby had never before noticed how careworn and old he looked, or that his shoulders were bowed.

"Well," he prompted, "couldn't you wait? I might have managed to shuffle off long ago if I'd 'a' known you was so anxious."

"Don't! For Heaven's sake, don't!" begged the wretched man.

"I was going to surprise you, Bert; but you couldn't wait," went on the old man relentlessly. "You thought I was unconscious or so near the end I wouldn't know."

"Well, then, if you must know the truth, Father, I *couldn't* wait!" Bert suddenly was erect and defiant. "I was desperate—half crazed with worry; and if that book there had anything in it that would ease me, if only for an hour, I was going to know it!"

"Desperate? Worry?" Surprise replaced the anger in the old man's voice.

"Yes, worry. And fear, and dread, and a dozen more of 'em taking the life out of me—and Alice!"

"Not debt?" The old man whispered the word fearfully, as he would have said, "Not murder?"

"Yes, debt! Everywhere! I've kept it hidden from you, for I know how you hate it; but there had to be debt if we were to live!"

"But, boy, I gave you a good salary."

"A pittance!"

"Your mother and I lived well on half as much!" flared the old man.

"Years ago; you couldn't do it now!"

"And, too, there's been the house rent free."

"It's not been fit to live in for ten years. It's shabby and old fashioned, and we're so crowded that the children are ashamed to have any company. I'd have built long ago if I'd had the money."

"What have you done with your

money?" The father's eyes turned like two coals in his grey old face.

"Money? Great Heavens!" The younger man grasped the whitening hair above his temples in a sort of frenzied despair. "There's never been enough for the bare necessities. If you'll remember, I wanted to go in with Hilton, who would have paid me twice as much as you did; but you took it so to heart that I gave it up, and we've skimmed along, all of us shabby, Alice and I overworked. I've had to see her ageing years in months, and powerless to help. Oh! if I'd known what I was bringing her into, I'd never have married her!" He dropped into a chair by the bedside, his head in his hands.

"Go on!" ordered the old man harshly, still unconvinced. He'd never seen any evidences of poverty. They'd always looked well dressed to him, and there'd never been any lack of food.

"But this summer has been the worst of all! Alice is breaking down; Paul hasn't been himself since he found he couldn't go to college with the rest of the boys in his class; and Rose is ruining her eyes sewing for the other girls to get money for music lessons. She has a wonderful voice, Father; and I've never been able to do anything for her."

"Sewing! Rose sewing!" Ormsby heard nothing beyond the word *sewing*. "Why in thunder didn't you tell me?" he demanded indignantly.

"I have told you at other times, but you always advised me to 'fight it out' on my salary; that it was good discipline."

"I suppose the business is all wrong, too?" Ormsby asked sarcastically.

"Yes!" The younger man's tone was positive. "Twenty years behind the times, with antiquated old tools to work with; and housed in a building—" He paused for something with which to compare it, then glanced about the low-ceilinged room with its sagging floor and rattling, many paned windows. "—And housed in a building on a par with this! But I don't care for the business, Father; it's Alice and the children." He leaned forward and laid his hand on that of his father, which was quickly withdrawn.

"Things have sort of been closing in on us lately," he continued, dejectedly; "and when I saw that book to-night—"

"You may leave me now," declared the old man with sudden energy.

"But, Father," the son objected in alarm.

"Go!"

"But suppose you get worse?"

"Go!" cried the old man violently, "or, by all that's holy, I'll get up and put you out!" He raised on his elbow and one foot came from beneath the covers.

"I'll go," his son agreed brokenly, and went slowly from the room.

Furious, tingling with anger, with the business of dying entirely forgotten, the old man lay thinking. Abused his family, did he? Gave them only a pittance? The old house wasn't fit to live in; the store ditto? They were overworked, shabby, breaking down? "Ye Gods!" he muttered savagely. So he had worked all his life for this! When he was dying peacefully, with no thoughts for anything but their grief—grief? It was joy!

He could now read aright that odd look on Paul's face. School was only two weeks away, and he supposed Alice, even while she was crying over him, was thinking that she'd look nice in black; and Amos, while he was praying, likely was deciding what he'd do with his money.

"I wont die!" he thought wildly, starting up in bed; "I'll fool 'em a trip. There's that tailor's mannikin—Bert talked to him once, and he said something about an operation—something about a watch-spring; but I wouldn't listen to him then; I was too set and bull-headed for any such nonsense. Huh? Set?—Bull-headed?—"

Slowly, he lay down again, hushed, wondering awe growing in his face. Set! Bull-headed—maybe old-fashioned! Could it be that he was *that*? He'd always thought he was rather progressive—rationally so, of course; a power in the town; an idolized patriarch in his family. Instead, it seemed that in their eyes he was but one degree above old Herick. He hadn't begun writing love letters to the girls yet; but, likely, that

would come in another year or two.

Oh! the whole idea was intolerable; but he must face it squarely, impartially; and if the amazing things the boy had told him were true, he must know it. Come to think of it, the traveling men *did* poke fun at the store; at the old kerosene lamps and at the water carried in from the hydrant, and all that; but he'd always taken it as their fun. And the house! Why, he'd thought it grand, elegant! But that was forty years ago. It was small, he had to admit; and it had no conveniences. Too, it had sort of slipped his mind that he had the sitting room; that time he'd had the grippe they'd moved him into it, and he found it so handy that he'd just stayed on. It did leave 'em rather short; only the dining room and the kitchen. He wondered how Alice had managed. She was a good manager and so ambitious! Why, what that girl couldn't do—

He remembered proudly telling some of the men one night that she cleaned and pressed all their clothes. They had looked at each other, but hadn't said a word. And she did all the washings and ironings, too—he remembered bragging about that; and how she colored things, and made over and down, and—Oh, Lord! It made him sick now to think of all that that frail little woman had done. And Bert had kept up with her. He'd often heard him slipping out of the house at four in the morning to work in the garden or among the chickens. He'd always felt gratified that he had such a son and daughter, pig-headed old idiot that he was—blind old Pharisee, living comfortably on the best the family had, with no thought of how they got it.

"Lord," he prayed, an hour later, with closed eyes and reverently clasped hands, "Lord, let me live a year longer; and if I don't kick up a dust on the turnpike that'll make 'em all sneeze, you can let me slide into the Other Place without a hearing." Then he coughed and, instantly, heard a movement outside the door.

"Bertie!" he called softly, "come and get Dad a drink?"

But "Bertie" did not get the drink immediately; instead, he dropped onto

the floor by the bed, racked by shivering, tearless sobs. "Oh, Father! It was ghastly, awful!" he whispered shrilly. "But I either had to tell you the truth or let you die thinking me a cad."

"Die?" repeated the old man in pretended surprise. "Who said anything about dying, Bert? Come to think of it, though, Doc. was chattering around last night about some one dying. Old Herrick, wasn't it?"

"I—I guess it wa—was, Father." It was just what the younger man needed to restore his self control.

"Doc.'s getting a little old-fashioned and behind the times, Son."

"What! Not dead yet?" Doctor Dible frowned, and his voice was distinctly reproving as he limped over to the bed.

"Why, hello, you pill-rolling oid fossil!" Ormsby's greeting was most cheerful. "No, you didn't shove me over this time, and, what's more, that chap in the corner over there, with the nosegay in his buttonhole, warrants me to run ten years when he gets me wound up to-morrow. Drop in, Doc., and see how a professional works," he added, magnanimously.

"Most likely I'll drop in and see crape on the door," the doctor growled disgustedly. "But, church must be about out. Here comes Amos. Gee! He's going to be disappointed; up half the night trying to write a sermon that wouldn't hurt the family."

"Yes; Doc. would have it that I had to go," Ormsby explained petulantly. "I thought, at first, I might as well, and have it over with; had things in pretty good shape, I thought."—He avoided his son's eyes.—"But, later, I felt as Alice, there, does when she goes away for a day. It's 'Good land, Father, did I shut the windows? *Did* I put out the cat? *Did* I do this and that,' till she thinks that maybe she wasn't ready to go, after all. Well, that's the way I feel; and I find I'll just have to hump myself if I get all done I've got to do."

"There's the children, now." He frowned at them, at which Lucille, the twin, laughed and ruffled up his grey hair. "We'll have to get some of them



out from under foot before we can do much. Paul, of course, is going to college—By the way, Boy—he met his grandson's astonished gaze squarely—"you'd better be getting your traps together, for it's only two weeks now; and the best, mind you, Boy; the very best."

The color flamed into the boy's face for a moment, then receded, leaving him very pale; and, muttering something about being back in a minute, he left the room.

"And there's Rose." The complaining old voice was a little shaken. "We'll pack her off to a singing school, wont we, little mother? For you and I don't want her distracting us with her nonsense when we get to work."

"Work, Father?" Mrs. Ormsby's tired face was alight with hope.

"Yes, work! You'd call building a house work, wouldn't you?" he demanded fretfully. "And I'll tell you what we're going to do; we're going to get the good points of all the houses in town—"

"If I catch you prowling around mine, I'll set the dog on ye," rumbled the doctor.

"—and then, we'll go 'em one better. I suppose," he added judiciously, his eyes on the ceiling, "that I might as well engage an architect by the month, for with the church and the new store—" The minister started violently.

"No, Amos; I'm not carrying you on my will any more." He spoke as though it was an unpleasant fact, but might as well be faced first as last. "So we'll just

build the church now and call it square. And wont we stick some of the old tight-wads." His eyes rested belligerently on the doctor.

"Of course, Bert," he amended, turning to his son, "you mustn't expect me to help you much with the new store. You must get along there without me. All I stick for is electric lights and an elevator—"

"An elevator to where, Father?" asked the astonished man.

"Oh! up to the ninth or tenth story," the other explained carelessly. "And we must have an automobile for all this running around. That's about all *we're* going to do, Alice—run around; you and I and the baby here. We'll get Lucien a pony and he can tag on behind us on it, I guess."

There was silence in the sick room for a time. Mr. Ormsby, seemingly very tired, closed his eyes. The two children exchanged delighted glances; the woman's hand cautiously sought that of her husband; and the minister's rapt face seemed illumined from thoughts within. Doctor Dibble, alone, sat regarding intently the haggard old face of his friend, a great tenderness hidden by his bushy brows. Some thought of his must have communicated itself to the drowsy man, for Mr. Ormsby's eyes opened wide.

"But one of the first things I'll do, Doc., is to beat you that game of chess!" he declared defiantly; and, rolling over comfortably, he turned his back on them all.



# The Upward Look

*The story of the Arizona  
man who bought Broadway*

By MICHAEL WILLIAMS

Author of



"Jerry Gallagher"

ILLUSTRATED BY

DOUGLAS DUER

**A**TTEMPTED Suicide." This was the chief of several charges preferred against Isaac Short, aged thirty-five, a mine owner, of Santa Cruz, Arizona, when he was arraigned in the Jefferson Market police court. "Drunk and disorderly;" "resisting officers in the discharge of their duty;" "riotous behavior and wanton destruction of property in the Hotel Knickerbocker;" and "obstruction of traffic in the public thoroughfares"—these were the other complaints.

"It looks like we'll need a car-r-rd index system to try this fella, bedad!" growled the magistrate, "Tammany Dan" Kerrigan.

Supported by his lawyer and a physician, the prisoner leaned heavily on the railing of the platform in front of the desk; his thick-set form collapsed, his head heavily bowed, and a black sombrero held in a shaking hand before his face. A throng of policemen, witnesses, and reporters surrounded him.

It was late in the afternoon of a sweltering September day, yet the dingy, malodorous, gloomy room was thronged. A number of other prisoners—representatives of the rag-tag and bobtail of the

city's squalid sinners, or of its army of hapless unfortunates—awaited their hearings. Among them was a girl who shrank away from the others and who, despite the deadly heat, kept a light coat huddled about her head so that her face was hidden.

The obese elderly magistrate—grown gray in the service of Justice in this, the lowest of her circles—snuffed audibly at a bottle of smelling salts and waved a palm leaf fan. Known as the kindest-hearted magistrate on the bench—sometimes, and perhaps justly, accused of unjudicial leniency toward unfortunates; cholerically impatient of routine and red tape, and more than a little ashamed of his weaknesses—"Tammany Dan" tried to disguise his failings by assuming the manners of an ogre. Policemen at once detested and adored him. He bullied them outrageously. Any officer caught lying or trying to wreak private animosities fared mightily hard in his court, and much harder, by and by, in Mulberry Street, for Kerrigan's pull extended far and high. But when a policeman was in trouble through errors or faults of his own human nature, the whole force was aware where such a one could go for help



To-day the officers appearing against Isaac Short felt satisfied. Obviously, the "old man" was in a bad temper. He was half asphyxiated by the poisonous atmosphere. Moreover, it was well known that he had little sympathy for Tenderloin profligates. Even the fact that the main case of the day had attracted a bevy of reporters—who all swore by Kerrigan and tickled him more than a little by giving him generous doses of publicity, which he affected to scoff at—was not mollifying his humor. Besides, the multiplicity of the charges against

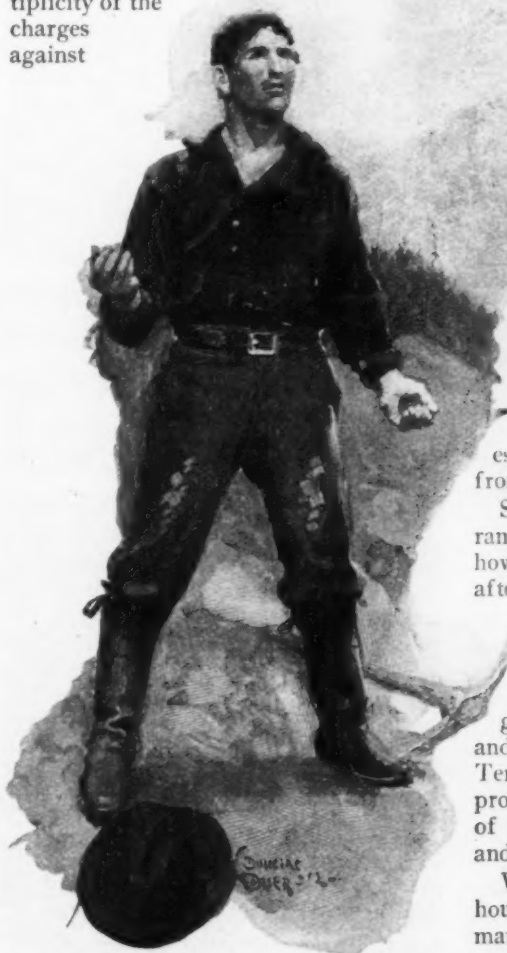
the mining man, necessitating tedious formalities, had made him "sore."

"Did the fella think he could knock New Yor-r-k into bits, as if he were shootin' up Red Dog Camp, or Tombstone, or I dunno what?" asked Tammany Dan.

If Isaac Short had failed in knocking New York into bits, he had certainly jarred it some. At least, he had given Broadway one of the shocks of its shock-habituated history, and the newspapers had done the rest in extending the thrill to the town. From a window in his room in the Hotel Knickerbocker he had showered hundreds of dollars in silver coins. It being the time when people were going to the roof gardens and various summer shows centered in Times Square, Short's actions soon attracted an enormous crowd, and the scrambling for his money quickly started a score of free fights, which didn't take long in attaining the magnitude of a riot, and which at last necessitated the calling out of the reserves from the Tenderloin police station.

Short, meanwhile, had started to harangue the crowd; quite unsuccessfully, however, for the mob howled him down after the first few words, demanding more money and less conversation. The few phrases gathered by the reporters suggested that apparently Mr. Short had "got religion," or thought he had, somehow and somewhere along the line of his Tenderloin career, which had been proceeding for weeks, much to the profit of saloon keepers, taxi-cabmen, waiters, and dance-hall denizens.

When the porters and elevator-men, house detectives, and, finally, the policeman who besieged Mr. Short's room, succeeded in breaking through the barrier of chairs and table and bed arranged



"I knew enough about ores to see without an assay that I'd struck it rich."

against his door, a fight had followed of which the evidences were still visible in the black eyes here and there turned upon the magistrate from among the throng of policemen and witnesses.

These events explain the charges other than that of attempted suicide, which, oddly, had been heaped on top of the others when Short had been brought to the police station. There he had been recognized by a policeman who was coming in from his post, as a man whom he had tried to arrest that evening about seven o'clock, in the act of putting a revolver to his head, at the entrance to a barroom. The policeman averred that having come upon Short quite suddenly, he had succeeded in snatching the weapon, but had failed in trying to arrest Short, as he had dashed away. The pearl-handled six-shooter bore this inscription:

Presented to  
IKE SHORT

in Recognition of his Services as Sheriff of Santa Cruz county, during two terms, when his Bravery and his Incorruptibility won the Gratitude of his Fellow Citizens.

"You see, your Honor," said the policeman, apologetically, "I didn't dare take a shot at him when he beat it—I mean, when he escaped—for fear I'd miss him and shoot into the crowd in the street."

"Too bad—'twas too bad, upon me sowl," growled Magistrate Kerrigan. "To kill a man for tryin' to do it himsilf and save him the trouble and the sin av some time to come."

In the midst of the ready laughter provoked by this, the prisoner was observed by the attentive reporters to be seized with so severe a trembling fit, that he had to be supported by his counsel and the physician.

"Brace up, now, Mr. Short!" whispered the doctor. "For your own sake, brace up. Here, take one of these."

He slipped a tablet to his patient, who gulped it down with an effort.

"Bromide—you know its taste, don't you?" said a reporter to another, who nodded, with a reminiscent smile, and stepped up to the physician, whom he knew.

"Mr. Short's pretty rocky?" he asked.

The doctor nodded. "He's in a deuce of a state—nerves all shot to pieces," he whispered; "do go easy with him, you fellows—I've never seen such a case. He's absolutely a changed man, too."

The reporter smiled and glanced skeptically at the head-bent figure of Short. "Let me give you a tip," he murmured; "don't try to work Tammany Dan with any sudden-conviction-of-morality gag. He wont fall for it."

"Now, then," grumbled Kerrigan, "let's get a move on. Which of you officers has charge of the hotel end of this matther?"

"I have, your Honor," said a policeman.

At the same moment a lawyer representing the Knickerbocker proprietors and also, it was understood, the Hotel-keepers' Association, stepped forward. It was his duty to do all he could to further the meting out of severe punishment upon Isaac Short, in order that the moral effect of the case might serve to deter others from causing trouble in the hostelry.

"Tell your story, and cut it short and swate," said Magistrate Kerrigan to the policeman.

But the counsel for the prisoner broke in here, saying:

"Your Honor, my client desires to save time and trouble by pleading guilty."

The reporters looked at each other in disappointment. They wanted piquant and funny details. A buzz of surprised, excited, or cynical comment broke out among spectators, policemen and witnesses. Tammany Dan glared ferociously at his clerk; the clerk indignantly cried, "Order in the court!" The fat, ancient court officers started out of somnolent attitudes into righteously repressive bustle, and silence resumed its sway.

"Does he plead guilty to all the charges?" asked the magistrate.

"Yes, your Honor," answered the counsel. "I wish, however, to plead for leniency. My client is sincerely sorry—"

"Humph!" snorted Kerrigan, grimly. "His kind are always sorry when the time comes for taking their medicine."

The counsel continued: "But my client's penitence is really sincere. He insisted upon pleading guilty. He has been an officer of the law, with the highest of reputations, and if your Honor will listen while I put before you a few circumstances that—"

"Your Honor!" exclaimed a new voice, that of the prisoner, as he broke from the hold of his physician and started forward. "Your Honor!" He choked. Then, gasping for breath, he convulsively resumed: "For the love of God, Judge, don't send me to jail! I'd—I'd go crazy! Anything but that, please, Judge, your Honor!"

There was something almost terrible in his passion. Even the reporters were moved. At a word, the case had been elevated from the level of grotesque comedy—a sordid farce inspired by alcohol—to another plane.

Tammany Dan sniffed heavily at his salts. For the first time, he looked attentively at the prisoner. Short's face was deathly pale beneath the coat of changeless tan that marked him as a man of the open air.

"'Tis a pity you didn't think of this before," Kerrigan said, severely.

"I hope, your Honor," commented the counsel for the hotel people, "that because this man wishes to shirk the penalty of his very serious mis-conduct you will all the more strongly recognize the necessity of dealing severely with this class of offenders, who come to New York merely to spend their money in orgies, and bring down reproaches on our city that we don't deserve."

"True for you, Mr. Counsel," said Tammany Dan, sagely nodding his head. "What with Pittsburgh millionaires, an' wild and woolly folk from the West—where, so I'm told, the favorite cocktail is whiskey straight—New Yor-rk's morality is all to the bad, heaven help us all! Isn't it terrible?" He cocked a sardonic eye at the solemn lawyer. "If we only could get their money away from them before they get to Broadway, wouldn't it be fine!"

Some of the more sycophantic court *attachés* yielded a tribute of pumped-up laughter to this facetiousness, but the old

magistrate checked it with a stern:

"Shut up—all av ye!"

Glaring at Short, he growled: "Now, thin, Mr. Man from Arizona, I'll give ye just five minutes to tell me why I shouldn't hold you for General Sessions on the more serious charges, and give ye all the law allows on the others. Don't waste anny of the toime palaverin' with your lawyer. Give me the straight av it yoursilf, right off the bat!"

Short peered wistfully through the waning light at the red-faced man above him, who was leaning forward, the better to look at him. The gaze of magistrate and prisoner met, searched, questioned each the other, and, perhaps, rendered intuitive judgments.

"Your Honor," Isaac Short commenced, slowly, and with difficulty, "it was something like this." He stopped, swallowed a lump in his throat, then proceeded. "Out in Arizona and Texas, I punched cattle, and worked with the Rangers, and as deputy sheriff, and as sheriff. Then I took a chance at prospecting, and first crack out of the box I struck her rich—just clear, Tom-fool luck, and nothin' else. And I pulls my freight for New York. You see, Judge, your Honor, we-all hear a heap out there about the gilt-edge proposition Broadway is when it comes to having a swell time, and long ago I made up my mind that if ever I had the price I was going to buy me the swellest time that money could get—"

"Bedad, we'll have to hand it to you that you didn't do so badly, Mr. Short, not so badly at all," said Tammany Dan, and another murmur of low laughter surged through the gloomy room. There is something stimulating to most men in drink, even at second hand.

But above the hubbub arose Short's husky voice, earnestly, doggedly averring: "Judge, your Honor, I was just a fool—a plumb locoed fool!"

"Just the same, I thought I was getting what I wanted, the first few weeks; it certainly looked like I was having a sure enough swell time. Why, I aint in New York three days before I'm fined four times for busting the speed limit with my new automobile."

"Yes, that was going some," said the magistrate.

"Then I put in a week at Coney Island, and meets up with three boys I used to know in Texas. They was doin' stunts with a Wild West show. I turned my bank roll loose, and, say, I give them boys a slice of high life for fair!"

"Humph!" grunted Kerrigan, eyeing the prisoner severely. "That was very kind of you, indade it was, and I hope and trust they properly appreciated all you did for them."

"It all went wrong, Judge," said Isaac Short, lugubriously, "just like everything else. Them boys all lost their good jobs, and one of them, the Animas Kid, broke his arm in a dance hall scrap, and he wont throw a rope again for months. That's what I did for them boys! But I can fix them, all right—that part don't worry me, Judge."

"Then let's get to your real tale of woe, my friend," said Kerrigan.

The old magistrate ruminated deeply while Short continued. This big man from the West, with his queer admixture of nervous dread and apparent frankness, was a new type to Kerrigan. Isaac Short impressed him as being at once more of a real man than most, and emphatically more childish. Childish! The idea remained with the magistrate. A child; yes, that seemed to throw light; this burly Arizona miner who had tried to tear up New York by the roots and play with it, was a child. And just at present he was a frightened child.

"Well, Judge," Short went on, "it's about a week before,"—here he faltered—"before my arrest, when I begin to find out what a fool I'm makin' of myself. The booze—the drink I mean, your Honor—don't keep hold on me the way I want it, though I cut out everything but champagne wine—"

"Then it's a wonder of the wor-rld that ye aren't in the morgue instead of here, my friend," said Tammany Dan; "but you nearly did land in the morgue, didn't you?"

"I guess I did," said the prisoner, slowly. "Let me tell you how that was."

Again he stopped. He looked mournfully at Kerrigan.

"It's all pretty clear in my own mind, Judge," he said; "but I'm no educated man. I guess I got to go shy on the right words to hold up my end in this here game, your Honor."

"Chip in with what you have," said Kerrigan.

"Thank you, Judge. Well, as I've said, the wine didn't keep me lit up like it did at first; but I couldn't quit nohow; I just naturally couldn't cut it out. Now and then it got me goin' for a few hours the way it did at the start-off—with the lights all sort of soft an' far away, and everything fine an' dandy; you know how it is, Judge, your Honor, after a man gets well soused, before the stuff begins to throw him down—you know how it is, yourself!"

Tammany Dan's red face, which told its own story, grew still more crimson; but from under his gray, beetling brows he swept a search-light glance, and nobody had a chance to crack a smile save one reporter, who saved himself by turning his back and walking away. He was about to return to the desk, hilarity relieved, when a hand pulled at his coat. He looked around, to see the girl who was awaiting a hearing. She was gazing at him with wide, wild eyes from a face the color of his copy paper.

One look at her was enough to tell his experienced observation that she was not a veteran. It was not merely because she was young; still less that she was pretty; she was more than pretty—she was good-looking—the good in her was still apparent, like the gold in a battered coin.

"You're one of the newspaper men?" she whispered.

He nodded.

"Please do something for me!"

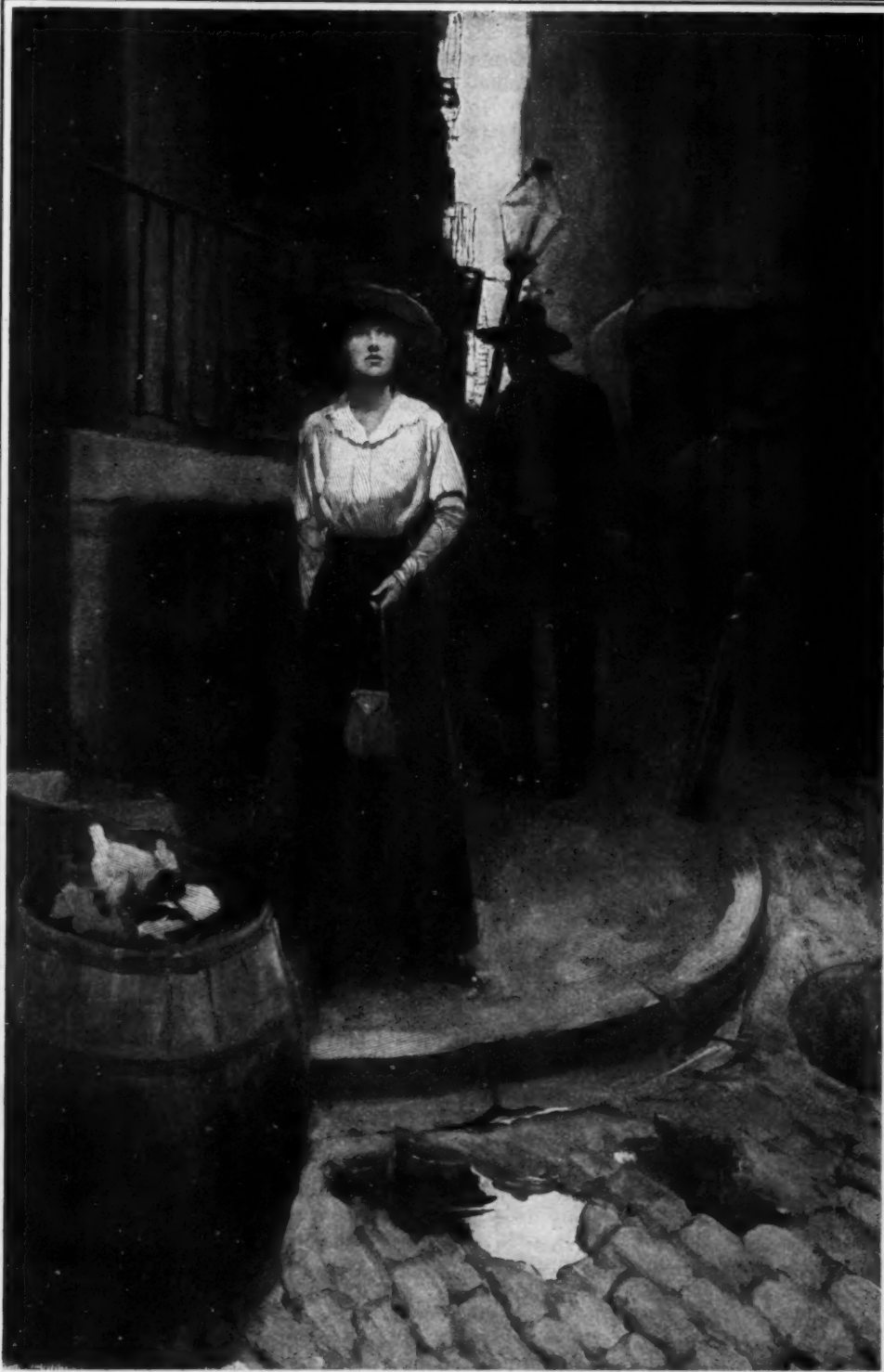
"I will if I can," he replied.

"You can help me, and I need help badly!" A stormy appeal shook her voice and her tensely nerved figure.

"What can I do?" he asked.

"The policeman who brought me here!" She fearfully pointed to an officer near by. "He's had it in for me, a long time! He's a grafter. He—he's mad on me because—Oh, you know his kind. He's fixed this case against me."





"She was a girl who comes out of a saloon, out of the back room, and I was just thinkin', 'What a hell town this is' . . . . An' all of a sudden she looks up, an' stood stock still. An' somebody else sees her do it, an' that person looks up—"



The reporter pitied her. He did not doubt. He happened to know the policeman. And such affairs were far from rare. But no doubt the policeman had plenty of witnesses ready.

"How can I do anything?" he asked.

"I'll tell you," urged the girl. "Oh, I hate to have to do it—but if you'd tell the judge—Look here, do you see that man up before him now?"

"The man who threw his money away?"

"I don't know anything about that, but I do know this, that he's the cause of me being in this fix."

"Gee whiz! More trouble for Short," murmured the reporter. He sat down by her. "Now tell me all about it," he said.

Isaac Short, meanwhile, all unconscious of the shaft he had unwittingly let loose to hit home at Tammany Dan, went on with his story.

"So you see, Judge, I tried to keep in the happy state, but it was no go. No matter how hard I hit it up, back I'd slide to a place where nothing was no good nohow, and where I could see nothing to myself but sure enough fool."

"Then I get started thinkin' about the day I made my big hit, up in the Santa Rita mountains. I knew enough about ores to see without waiting for an assay that I'd struck it rich. I was alone. It was just after sundown, and the glow was pouring up behind Old Baldy, and it was so quiet on the mesa that it seemed like you could have heard a man strike a match fifty miles away. I had them lumps of ore in my hand, and I said out loud, 'Well, here she is; I'm rich, an' kin do what I like.' I was lookin' down at the ore all the time, an' I begins to think how I'd always allowed that if I raised the price—the price for something big, nothing cheap, no piker's game—I'd ride on the velvet to Broadway, New York, and sure enough have one swell time for once. Then I looks up—say, Judge, that was queer!"

Short checked himself. His eyes, looking at Kerrigan, seemed also looking beyond him, far away—three thousand miles away, to where, above vast and lonely mesas, Old Baldy lords it over his army of lesser peaks.

"It sure was queer—how I feels just then! There was that big quiet light behind Old Baldy, and the stars were coming out, and I can hear nothing stir anywhere at all; but it was like there was *something* there that was sayin' to me—though it was just myself talking out loud: 'Say, any cheap skate can blow himself to a swell time on Broadway if he stumbles over the money like you have. Say, Shorty, why don't *you* try your hand at something different, some stunt that's worth while?'"

"Then I tries to think of what a fellow might do; and, say, I felt kind of lit up, better than ever a jolt of booze had fixed me; but I couldn't keep it going; I just couldn't seem to get anywhere; so I gives it up. And as soon as I had made my deal to sell my mine, I forgot all that line of thought about doing something worth while, and I headed for my swell time in New York."

"And, as I've said, I fell down on it—fell down hard. And the mean, sticky heat got my goat—we don't have no such heat in my country, Judge, even when the mercury climbs up through the roof of the glass. And I was sure enough sour-balled. I could figure myself out no way but as plumb fool, fit for nothing, and doing nothing but booze and waste good money while decent people might be starving to death. An' I aint got no family, and aint fit for one; so one evening, getting to the end of my rope, I says, 'I'm bound for the D. T. ward, or the lunatic asylum—so I'll wind her up right now—here goes nothin',' I says, and pulls my gun."

"But the cop grabbed me—I was on a street corner among a crowd. The notion of going to jail scared me—for I'd sure go crazy if I was ever locked up, and I broke and run, and got clear away from him. By and by I finds myself near the West River. I'm in a part of town new to me. As for that, all I know about your town, anyway, is about ten blocks on Broadway and the roads where I've been automobilin'."

"This place where I kind of wakes up to find myself is the limit for fair! I thinks sure I must have died and gone

to hell! It's worse in them streets than in any Mexican quarter I ever see, because it's so—so plumb rotten. The sticky heat was something fierce, and all the dirty little kids looked like they was too sick of it to play any more; and the women in the windows, and on the steps, an' in the dirty little stores, where millions of flies were buzzin'—I never see such women! And the men were worse. Phew! there was heaps of garbage everywhere, because of the strike of garbage collectors; and old newspapers, and a dead horse; an' the air looked like some kind of dirty smoke, and it tasted like bad eggs.

"That finished me, yes, sir! I thinks: 'Here's where I belong, sure enough. Here's the bottom of the town where I've been blowing in fifty dollars a day. Oh, what's the use? I'm goin' down to the river and wind things up. I aint fit to live, even in this street—and I wouldn't live here even if I was.'

"So I pushed on for the river. And, Judge, your Honor, that's when it happened."

He stopped.

"When what happened?" asked the magistrate.

Short stared at him with a strangely wistful expression.

"Judge, I don't how to tell you."

Kerrigan said gently: "You're doin' fine, me boy, so go ahead."

"Well, your Honor, the point is that what happened wasn't anything very much, if you look at it one way—but it was—well, it was a whole heap—say, it was everything for me!"

"Go on, go on, me boy!"

"Well, Judge, just at that moment, when I'm pluggin' along for the river with my head down, happening to glance to one side of the street, I see somebody looking up!"

Isaac Short almost whispered the words, and his voice was vibrant with a singular emotion. The group about the desk was strangely impressed.

"You saw somebody looking up!" repeated the magistrate. "Well—what of it?"

"Why, Judge, your Honor, she was a girl who comes out of a saloon, out of

the back room, an' I was just thinkin', 'What a hell town this is—a girl like that goin' to the bad!' An' all of a sudden she looks up, and stood stock still. An' somebody else sees her do it, and that person looks up—and then somebody else—and then a whole lot of people sees them first people, and *they* look up—an' they all stopped talkin'—an' the kids they quit their squallin'—an' the people in the dirty little stores come out to look up—an' even the folks in the saloon come out an' look up—an' so did I—"

Again he paused, fumbling in his mind for words.

"Well, an' what was it you saw?" asked Kerrigan, gently.

"Well, Judge, it wasn't much—but, say, it was fine! Say, it was just fine! I guess the people in that street was a good deal like me—feelin' so bad, an' mean, an' so taken up with their troubles, an' the heat, an' the dirt, an' the stores and the saloon, an' what was goin' on in the street, that they'd plumb forgot about the sky. Well, that sky that evenin' was something great—the west all full of the sunset glow, an' over our heads the sky is blue as it gets in Arizona, and across it, lookin' as if it was up among the stars that were comin' out, a fire-balloon was driftin'.

"Judge, you know how it is at a movin' pitcher show, when one of them magicians does a stunt, and changes a lot of people into swell dressed lords an' ladies, an' all that? Well, them people in the street seemed changed like that, somehow. They were all kind of shining, because their faces caught the sunset light as they looked up at the balloon, which was like a big Mexican opal up there in the blue, an' for a little while they got away from the heat, and the dirty street.

"Gee, it was great! It—well, it sure *got* me, somehow! I got to feelin' the way I did in the desert, only a heap sight stronger—and right then something happened to me—I don't know exactly what it was, Judge, your Honor—but the light on them faces seemed to get *inside* of me, see? An' I felt it runnin' through me quicker and stronger than any drink of wine or whiskey I

ever hoisted aboard in my life—but it was plumb different, an' right there I knew I was through with wine an' whiskey for good and all. Yes, sir, you can bet your life on that there proposition, Judge, your Honor—-an' I knew I wasn't goin' to jump into the river, but that I was goin' to start in to live—to live as near *right*, your Honor, as a fellow like me can do."

He stopped. A silence, partly of astonishment, partly produced by an emotion deeper and stranger than surprise, held the dingy room in a momentary spell.

Magistrate Kerrigan straightened himself. He seemed to sigh. Taking up the battered book on which oaths are administered, he adjusted his spectacles on his red, bulbous nose, turned the pages of the book with fingers that knew their way, and said:

"Let me recom-mind to me friends, the newspaper boys, that if they are puzzled, as I was at first, by this case, they may foind light in Acts, 9, 3."

And Tammary Dan read aloud in a sonorous voice:

"'An' as he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly there shone round about him a light from Hivin.'"

"Our friend from Arizona, apparently," continued Kerrigan, "found *his* road to Damascus in the vicinity of Ninth Avenue and Twentieth Street. Well, well! He was lucky!"

"Now, Mr. Short, go on. What happened next?"

The prisoner's exalted state had flagged; he was now awkward, self-conscious, and embarrassed. Moistening his pale lips with his tongue, he said, hesitatingly:

"Well, your Honor, I goes over to—the girl who had come out of the saloon, and spoke to her. I guess she—well, her mind was still thinkin' of what she'd seen in the sky, for she turned on me, and tried to hit me."

"'Twas a pity she didn't shoot ye!" roared old Magistrate Kerrigan.

The prisoner was electrically shocked from his lethargy. "Hold on!" he cried, peremptorily, his deep voice ablaze with the fire of his anger. "Nothing like that

—no, sir, nothing like that! You're making the same mistake the girl made!"

Kerrigan was about to reply, but the reporter who had been talking with the girl prisoner, leaned across the desk and whispered rapidly. The magistrate was observed to jump in his chair. He conferred with the reporter, and the latter wrote a name on a slip of paper. Then he retired, to be at once button-holed by his curious *confrères*.

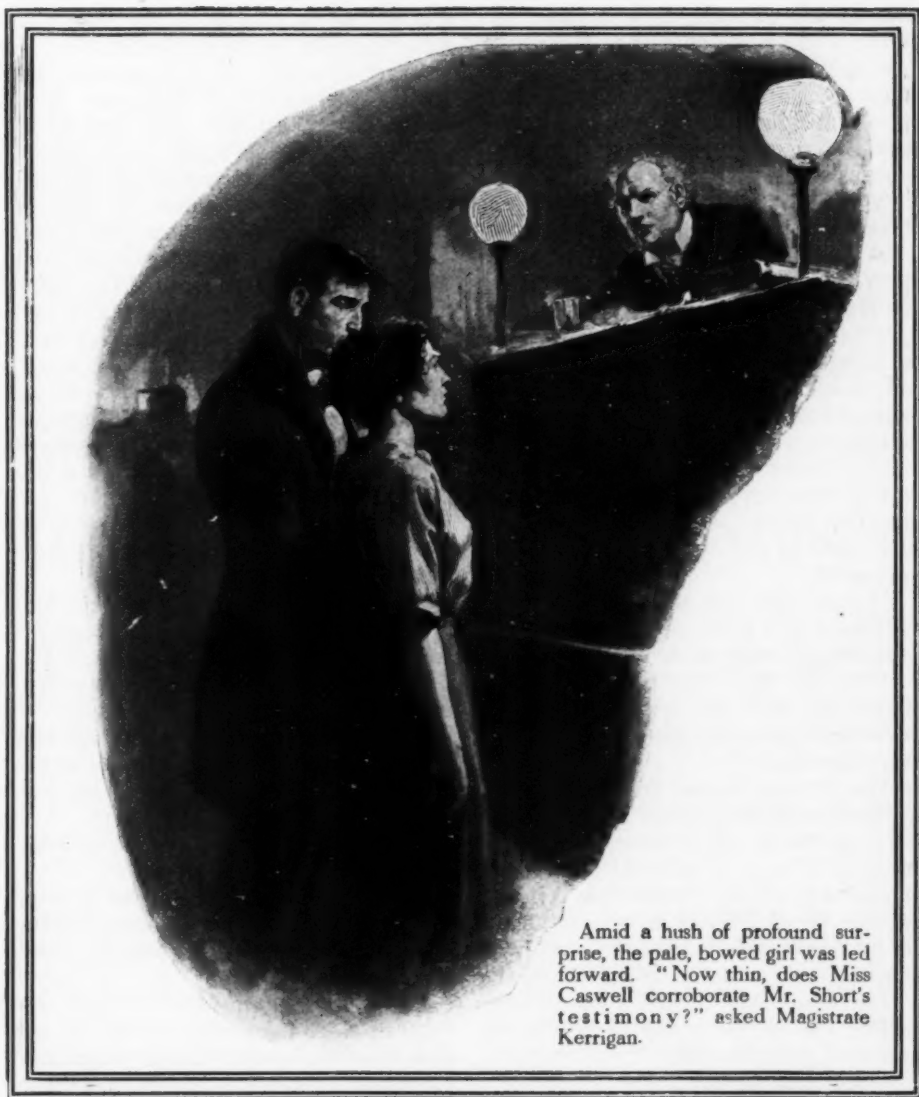
"Proceed, Mr. Short," said the magistrate.

"Yes, Judge," said Short, "you're wrong, as the girl was. I told her so. At first all she would say was, 'You're drunk.' 'I'm only part drunk,' I said, and at last she began to believe me, an' I told her that—that if she wanted her chance to try things over, she sure could have it. I got her story from her—an', say, it was a hard luck one, an' true, too, I'm sure of that. So we arranged to meet the next day, when I'd be straightened out, and then I went away."

"And took a few more drinks, to celebrate the blissid occasion, didn't ye?—An' thin ye proceeded to corrupt the pop-u-lace with your money, an' to wreck the Hotel Knickerbocker, an' to start a riot on Broadway," commented Kerrigan.

Short hung his head, but answered firmly: "No, I took no more drinks—an' I haven't, though at times I thought I'd go crazy. Ask the doctor here. But the drink I already had in me wasn't quit-tin' so easy as I was. With my mind running over with my ideas of how I was goin' to do different, an' give other people a chance, if I could, and with the booze still working underneath, I guess I was more than two-thirds a lunatic. The way it looked to me then, was that all I had to do was to tell people what had happened, and get them started on the looking up habit, and so, of course, they'd all feel like me. So I figured out that I'd invest a bunch of coin right away, getting the thing started. So I went to my room, where I kept a suitcase full of ready money—and I waded right in—an'an' it all went dead wrong, of course.

"They wanted my money, an' wouldn't listen to a word. They hardly even



Amid a hush of profound surprise, the pale, bowed girl was led forward. "Now then, does Miss Caswell corroborate Mr. Short's testimony?" asked Magistrate Kerrigan.

looked up at me, they was so busy huntin' the dollars.

"Well, Judge, then—then all the trouble kept on, till I was arrested. A lawyer came and got me bailed out, and then I was put in charge of the doc here for a few days, an' the drink died out of me—but the light that got inside of me has stayed there, your Honor. And, and there's just one thing more."

Here Short broke down and could not regain control of himself for a time.

"About that girl, your Honor. She—she's all right—she— Well, her face kind of got in my mind, along with the light—an' since I've been out on bail I've hunted her up—an' I fixed it with her, in spite of all the fight she made against me, to—to—well, to take a chance—and marry me. This very morning I got the license. And now—Judge, your Honor!"—here Short's voice quivered with pain—"now she's disappeared—she's done quit, and gone away! Judge, I'll



gladly pay double for all the damage I've caused—I'll do anything you say, if you'll just turn me loose so I can hunt her up! We'll leave this town, an' go West and start things over, if I can find her—and figure out together some real way of doing some decent thing with my bunch of coin."

"Short!" almost barked Kerrigan. "You mean what you say?"

"You bet I do, Judge, your Honor!"

"You've no notion where the girl is?"

"No, your Honor."

"Then listen: she's been arrested, and is being shoved along to prison by a very zealous officer of our exceedingly wise and in-fallible laws, who saw her talking to you in the street."

Isaac Short staggered back against the railing of the dock, his lips opening and shutting, but no word able to form itself, until at last he hoarsely, brokenly whispered:

"Judge, can you help me? Can you help her? If I try to do a thing right it goes wrong, every time."

"Oh, ye only lack experience, Mr. Short—an' like all new reformers ye rush your work too fast," said Magistrate Kerrigan.

The old man leaned forward.

"If Mr. Short's counsel agrees to give bonds to insure the financial reimbursement of all who've suffered damage by the attempt of our friend from Arizona to take New York by the scruff av its neck an' make it study the stars, will they agree to withdraw their charges?"

Tammany Dan cocked a hard, compelling eye on the group of policemen, and they promptly said:

"Sure, your Honor."

"Oh, agreed, agreed!" said the counsel for the hotel people, shrugging his shoulders, "—though I do think something should be done to make this case a warning to other seekers after what Mr. Short calls a swell time on Broadway."

"Lave that to me," said Magistrate Kerrigan, with a prodigious wink at the lawyer.

He turned solemnly to the prisoner.

"Isaac Short," he said, in his most impressive judicial manner, "you have

pleaded guilty, and have thrown yourself on the mercy of the court. Will you agree to abide by my judgment?"

Short braced himself, squared his broad shoulders, met Kerrigan's gaze and answered: "I sure will, your Honor!"

"Then, Mr. Short, we'll find, I think, that a little av your money will help the cause of justice to look up quite a bit, so I'll fine ye for obstructing traffic, and so forth—I'll fine ye—well, I'll be generous, and call it three hundred dollars."

"Whew-w!" whispered a reporter, "Tammany Dan raised the limit, sure!"

"And, in addition, Mr. Short—in order that ye wont feel that you can get out of all your scrapes by paying down ready money, I'm going to impose a life sentence of matrimony upon ye."

"Let Miss Gertrude Caswell be brought forward!" said Magistrate Kerrigan.

Amid a hush of profound surprise and interest, the pale, bowed girl was led forward by the newspaper man.

"I wonder, now," said Tammany Dan, his eye going to a certain policeman, "I wonder if Policeman Schwartz will feel loike withdrawing his charge, afther hearing Mr. Short's account of his conversation with this gir-r-rl?"

"Yes, your Honor—I guess I was mistaken," muttered Schwartz.

"It would seem so—I'll give ye your chance to explain how it happened to the Commissioner," said Tammany Dan, grimly.

"Now, thin, does Miss Caswell corroborate Mr. Short's testimony, so far as it concerns herself?" asked Magistrate Kerrigan—in a voice that did not sound like that of the man who had just spoken to Schwartz.

"Yes, your Honor," she said, lowly.

"And will you help me to make good my sentence on him?"

She could not speak, but she bowed her bowed head still lower, quickly lifting it, however, as Isaac Short came near. Just then the lights on the desk were turned on, and as their illumination fell on the faces of the man and woman looking up at him, Magistrate Kerrigan knew that his sentence was just.



# A Diluted Diplomat

Polly Ripple extricates herself  
from a Railroad "Accident"

by  
ERNEST L. STARR

Author of "The

Ripple Case," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY



EDMUND FREDERICK

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OLLY RIPPLE wouldn't have cared if she'd had on more clothes.

As it was, her shimmery dressing-gown—compounded of that fine-crinkled stuff which clings closer than an antiphlogistic poultice—attracted far wider attention than she desired, as she passed for the third time in thirty minutes through the sleeping car ahead of her own.

The second time she traversed the forward car her light, fluffy little head had been held high, for she was well pleased with the result of the impatience which had led her to invade the distant dressing-room when she found that of her own sleeper crowded with women whose puffy eyes glittered resentfully at the enforced early-morning intimacy.

Polly had waked with a smile, a red-lipped twist signifying nothing more than utter content with the world and herself and the ways of each. If the smile failed to counteract the abruptness of her entrance into the dressing-room a few steps from her section, it was because the door brought up abruptly against the elbows of a stout lady whose teeth clicked unpleasantly when she shut her astonished mouth—as if she

were afraid of losing them. At the identical moment Polly, in entering, further incensed the disheveled assemblage by quite unintentionally causing the heads of two women, leaning simultaneously toward the floor, to come together with an horrified thud.

Polly's determination to delay her entrance was of immediate inception. The expression of regret she sought to phrase caught in her throat, for the reason that the bitter glances leveled at her as she hurriedly closed the door brought an irresistible, trilling, joyous little laugh to her lips—and forthwith she made for the dressing-room of the car ahead. There the intricacies of her morning preparations were accomplished in peace and solitude, with time even for unhurried peerings through the window at the familiar Colorado landscape.

On leaving the dressing-room, her second progress through the car began triumphantly and ended in sheer, appalling disaster; for when she debouched upon the following coach, which by every law of continuity and expectedness should have been hers, she found herself face to face with an observation-car full of silent, smoking, most observant men. Looking down the

length of it and through the far glassed end she saw the country along the route assuming appearances of dizzy variety, with fields rolling like troubled water and hills speeding humpily off to join the mountainous army on the horizon.

Her car wasn't there. It was gone, quite gone; and wherever it was, there also was a dressing bag packed full of all that made life worth living. The rails oozing from beneath the train held her fascinated like a shining, whirring hypnotic machine. Regardless of the twenty odd pairs of eyes turned inquiringly upon her, she stood fixed and still. Her destination, though but two and a half hours distant, seemed removed to boreal lengths; and her present costume, pretty to absurdity, was not built for such temperatured journeyings. Until the moment she had thought it more than usually effective. Now it became a thing of pitiful transparency, a shameless, insufficient subterfuge.

With a start and a flush Polly retreated. In the vestibule she fell upon a porter, and shot him through with frantic questions. It was true. The series of convulsive rigors through which the train had passed while she was in the dressing-room was explained. Three times the porter told her that her own car had been detached and switched off, but, as in the case of explanations of the woes of formidable theology, Polly found herself no whit happier in her knowledge than she had been in her ignorance.

Polly's eyes grew bigger and darker; her contracting heart drew back the color from her cheeks; her hands clutched at the neck of the despised costume. The one place she wanted to be was in the dressing-room that had tricked her with its baleful comfort and solitude. She tried to find courage to pass through the car again. If she'd had on more clothes she wouldn't have cared, but as it was—any man who has looked into the back pages of one of those large, ladylike magazines without which no home is complete, should have an idea as to how few and chilly are the "things" that properly belong under a dressing-gown such as Polly wore.

She started out. The smooth fullness of her face covered her grittingly clenched teeth; her lowered lids hid the misery in her eyes. Swiftly she went forward, with lightning muscular readjustments against the rolling of the coach, bravely unmindful of a quickly upturned face here, a down-thrust newspaper there, of observation everywhere. It was easier than she thought. The passage was only so long after all. As she neared the end, she lifted her eyes to the door of the drawing-room section. When she put out a hand to the top of a seat to steady herself for the abrupt swing around the curve, the door of the drawing-room opened, and she was confronted by that exemplar of practical politics in the great city of Denver, Judge Thomas L. Goddard.

"Tom!" cried Mrs. Ripple.

More quickly than she thought she could tell it, to Goddard or even to her own Mr. Loudon Ripple, Polly outlined her difficulty. Before she knew how it happened, she was seated on the forward-facing seat in Judge Goddard's drawing-room, the door discreetly ajar, the conductor's interest aroused, the porter's perfervid assistance secured.

When telegrams were sent to Mr. Loudon Ripple in Denver, Polly was very careful to say nothing of the means of extrication from her embarrassment. She asked merely for a certain gown, a particular hat, her electric coupé, and the presence of Mr. Ripple at the station. A vivid prescience of what Loudon would think if he knew where and with whom she was, had the effect of nervously heightening her enjoyment of the situation while she deplored the possibility of his learning of it.

The precaution of telling but a part of the truth was both wise and necessary, since to Mr. Loudon Ripple, undoubtedly the solidest and most promising of the younger leaders of the new Reform Party, the name of Judge Goddard was anathema; more, it was the summing up—in Ripple's estimation—of all that the Reform Party was fighting against in the spectacular campaign now progressing.

Polly, however, had never been able



Through the far-glassed end she saw the country along the route assuming appearances of dizzy variety. Her car wasn't there. It was gone; quite gone. She wouldn't have cared if she'd had on more clothes.

to overlook the fact that she had known Goddard long before Ripple, and that if Goddard hadn't once missed a train and kept her waiting all afternoon—it was a most important afternoon, because Ripple came along toward the end of it—she might be Mrs. Some One Else now. Not that she regretted the eventuation; on the contrary she was most happy, happy as any human woman could be with a husband whom every one spoke of as “a solid young man.”

To one who knew the two men as well as Polly did, comparison was inevitable. She could no more avoid calling Judge Goddard “Tom” than she could resist the potent, old-time appeal of the man's personality. The news-boys employed by the papers which attacked him cheered him on the street. Counsel for the defense in open court had been known to call him by his Christian name, with a rebuke of the laughing eye and down-drawn lip rather than commitment for contempt.

Polly was a rabid Reformer. She accompanied Loudon to all his meetings. Once she had herself addressed an overflow meeting from the steps of her electric coupé. Loudon wrote the speech for her. She could repeat some of it now, and she remembered distinctly that she wore a black and white coat suit, satin pumps, and an absolute duck of a hat.

She was returning now, in fact, from a political mission, the success of which she most anxiously anticipated. With a degree of tact unknown to the men members of the Reform Party, she had sought to accomplish a thing in which her own Loudon had signally failed. On her individual initiative, for love of Loudon, and the good of the Party, she had spent two days with the great feminist leader, Mrs. Ermingarde Stoll Wrecker, in the effort to persuade her to join forces with the Reformers, and to come to the city to speak for the Cause.

Polly, by the happy chance of nature, was an unalloyed optimist. Prodiggally, she sowed the seeds of Reform in the Wrecker home. Anxiously, zealously she treasured every hopeful expression that fell from the lips of the great lady. Polly's fervent desire was that, on her re-

turn to the city, she might give Loudon the definite promise of the one thing needed to assure victory to the Reform Party: the support of the powerful Mrs. Wrecker.

Polly's two days had been full of contrasts: hours of high-sounding discussion with Mrs. Wrecker, relieved by periods of lighter—and to Polly far more agreeable—association with Mrs. Wrecker's daughter of twenty, named Willie in honor of the departed Mr. Wrecker.

The daughter proved every time she opened her mouth that genius skips a generation, but Mrs. Wrecker loved her blindly and entirely, giving her everything but the one thing she wanted most, and that was beyond Mrs. Wrecker's power. Miss Wrecker's heart-scorching ambition, fostered by private school friendships, was to be accepted socially in Denver.

Therefore, Polly, who was born to that inmost circle designated by outsiders as the Secluded Forty-Six, was welcomed in the Wrecker home for her possibilities as well as for her elect and voluble self.

Mrs. Wrecker belonged to Judge Tom Goddard's party in state and national issues. Polly knew that Goddard would give anything short of half his kingdom for the news of her defection to the support of the Reformers.

The possession of the secret filled Polly with new party zeal. Strange Russian secret-service thrills ran over her. She felt dangerously knowing. Yet her exhilaration merged oddly into a gentle pity for Goddard and his misguided affiliations.

“I should think you'd be ashamed of yourself, Tom,” she said, “to continue to be mixed up with that bunch of—of—”

“Robbers,” Goddard supplied smoothly, “though sometimes the designation is varied to corrupters of legislation, blighters of the flower of civic health, and often to just plain crooks.”

“You are different from the rest, Tom,” Polly said softly.

“No man could be all that—and live,” laughed Goddard.



"The Reformers are going to win, Tom," Polly intimated.

"Do you think so?"

"I know it!"

"What then, Polly?" Goddard asked.

"There'll be no more room in our wagon very soon," Polly said ingenuously.

"We have a wagon, thank you—"

"Thought it was a steam roller," Polly interrupted. "It's going to pieces anyhow!"

Just then a card was brought to Goddard. Polly saw and recognized the well-fed, well-known gentleman waiting outside the door, but she said nothing. She could not determine whether Goddard sensed her surprise. Goddard explained that the *en route* visitation was not unexpected. It was, in fact, an appointment which could not be kept in the city. It accounted for his occupying the drawing-room section of the sleeper, the nature of it being such that the city would be taken by the ears if Goddard were known to confer with this man at the current stage of municipal politics.

"I am interfering with your affairs!" Polly exclaimed. "I'm very sorry."

"Not at all, Polly. When I asked you in here I knew my visitor would board the train at the last station. The interview is of his seeking, however—not mine!"

"I must go," Polly said. "I dare say this is very important. I'm in the way,"—Polly looked about her hesitatingly—"but where on earth shall I go?"

"You will stay just where you are," Goddard said downrightly. "This talk is important, Polly, very important. In fact, it's important enough to make me request a queer kindness of you."

"What is it?" Polly asked quickly. "If I can repay ever so small a part of what you have done for me this morning—"

Goddard intently searched her face, questioningly, weighingly. He seemed to be trying to find something beneath the brittle, sparkling shell of her.

"Polly," he said slowly, "you don't believe the stuff you've heard about me; do you?"

Polly's eyes came very near moistening, for no reason except that the plea

in Goddard's voice was sudden, intimate and beseeching.

"I've always believed in you, Tom!" she said gently.

"Truly, Polly?" insisted Goddard.

"Truly," she repeated, "honestly and truly!"

"Then believe a while longer," Goddard said, "and help me now."

Polly assented smilingly and emphatically.

"I'm going to talk with my visitor," Goddard continued rapidly, "in the section just outside this door. If I am seen, there will be a scandal. I shall sit facing the other end of the car, with my eyes open. I sha'n't be surprised from that entrance; but I can't see the door at this end on account of the curve in the passage. If you will kneel here—"

Goddard drew aside the silk curtain over the window in the inner wall of the compartment, and with a world-is-mine gesture pointed out to Polly the clear sweep of vision to be had along the narrow passage leading to the doorway of the coach.

"I see," said Polly uncertainly.

"If anyone passes whom I wouldn't want to see, call out 'Sss-st!' to me. You know more than enough of the situation to understand the kind of people I mean."

"Sss-st? Just like that?" said Polly.

"I'll hear you," Goddard assured her. "The door will be partly open. You'll do it for me, Polly?"

Polly climbed to the couch-seat beneath the window and gingerly pulled apart the curtains. Her small heels extended behind her. A slipper fell off. The clinging costume developed abominably antiphlogistic tendencies. Polly suffered; but she *did not* give in.

"I'll do it," she sighed.

Goddard warmly grasped her hands, and turned toward the door.

"Sss-st!" called Polly, and Goddard came back to her. "Tom," Polly whispered, nodding in the direction of the scandal-suggesting person outside, "suppose somebody does come: what will you do with *him*?"

"Why—well—" Goddard said stumbly, "then I'm afraid—"





Polly, still kneeling on the couch, sank thoughtfully to her heels. She was greatly troubled. "Three's an awful lot of people to know a secret," she reflected.

Polly explosively completed his thought: "In here? Me with this rag wrapped round me? Oh, Tom!"

"What else is there?" Goddard asked. "I'll get into all kinds of trouble if you don't let me. He won't tell. I am as sure of that as I am that you will forget all this the moment it is over. Please, Polly—please!"

Polly, still kneeling on the couch, sank thoughtfully to her heels. She was greatly troubled.

"Three's an awful lot of people to know a secret," she reflected.

"About your being here? That's easily explained," Goddard protested.

"You've never tried to explain to Loudon. It would take me a month!"

Polly told herself that it was Goddard's drawing-room after all, and he had secured it for this very purpose. She turned to the silk-curtained window, frowning and smiling.

"Go, Tom; I'll watch," she said, and concluded hopefully, "perhaps no one will come!"

Goddard withdrew, leaving the curved door partly open. Polly began her vigil. Nothing eventful occurred. No suspicious person appeared. Men and women passed hurriedly along the narrow way, with perfectly praiseworthy motives as far as Polly could see. Polly's back grew very tired and her attention began to wander.

She caught a phrase or two of the conversation outside the door. The voices carried clearly through the hum of the wheels. At once she tried to dull her sense of hearing, and turned back energetically to the window. No one passed. Deprived of the least distraction, Polly's attention was given gradually, yet more and more completely, to the interview of Goddard and the personage.

At first it was not at all obvious. Polly could gather only that a consolidation was under discussion between individuals who had never before agreed in any detail of state or city politics. Polly had recognized Boss Westford while he waited at the door: Westford, that same Boss Westford whom Loudon was always fighting in the old days before Loudon severed his relations with his

party in city affairs; Westford, whose methods had driven many others besides Loudon into the ranks of the new Reform Party; Westford, who was as powerful now in his regular party as Goddard was in the other, though in every way inferior to Goddard.

Polly was surprised that he and Goddard should confer for any reason whatever, since they had unfailingly been at odds. Now Westford was proposing—Polly gasped when she heard it—that the differences between the two parties should be smoothed over and forgotten in order that they, united for the first time, might bend their combined facilities to the destruction of the Reform Party.

Polly was utterly amazed. Loudon's party—her party—the city's opportunity to redeem its good name—everything endangered by such a coalition! Polly's breath came stutteringly. She slipped along the seat, huddling at the end of it, a foot from the open door. And Goddard was listening! She failed to credit him with the suave opposition he brought to the plan. She wanted to hear him sound a scathing denunciation, to rumble forth vituperation and invective. Instead, he was listening! In her anxiety she overlooked the force of his quiet, smoothly interjected statements of opposing facts and conditions. Listening—Goddard, whom she had trusted, whom she had assured of her trust! As a party leader Polly would have been constantly in the thick of a political simoon, through her very straightforwardness and the immediate frankness of her speech. Listening! Polly's faith in mankind took a tumble, and she turned back disgustedly to her watching.

The train was leaving a way station little more than half an hour from Denver. Polly wished with all her heart that she were safe at home. She didn't want to see Goddard; she wanted Loudon. He would never disappoint her. No man would dare approach him with such a proposition. Politics as a diversion, she decided, was a mistake; as a business—humph!

In the comparative lull Polly heard the voices again. This time she was glad of

what she heard, for Goddard was refusing—very diplomatically, very suavely, refusing. She took herself to task for thinking even momentarily that he was the sort of politician to make that fine distinction between holding the bag and thrusting one's hand into it.

Smiling happily in her restored confidence, she glanced idly through her watching-window. She started, aghast, unaware of the hollow, hurried bump of her excited head against the glass. In the passage was a profile of frightful familiarity. Her heart gave a record jump, and subsided to a series of tight, tearing, hobbled kicks. Was there another chin in all the world quite so finely and firmly modeled, and at the present moment quite so completely unwelcome? There was no time for consideration. Common gratitude demanded that she remember only her promise to Goddard. This much he deserved at her hands. Nevertheless Louden, having come two stations out to meet her, would derail the train if necessary to accomplish it. If only he could find her alone in the drawing-room! But she had promised. She essayed the signal. Her teeth refused to meet. She fixed her lips and hissed out what breath was left in her.

The door opened at once to admit Goddard and his visitor. Polly sank weakly to a seat, no longer ashamed of her appearance, but furiously, miserably ashamed of herself.

"Tom," she cried forlornly, "it was Louden! I feel a blood relationship to Benedict Arnold—but I kept my promise! Now get me out of this!"

Goddard gave a rapid explanation to his interviewer. Being in a position to request his silence and assistance, Goddard suggested that he leave the train at the earliest opportunity. The visitor delayed but half a minute to make a last urgent plea—firmly rejected by Goddard—and turned regretfully to the door. Polly was beginning to be thankful for relief from at least one of her complications, when—

Half a minute's delay has caused revolutions to miscarry, circumstantial evidence to win its deadly way, and brides to faint.

The conductor opened the door with the cheerful cry, "Here she is, Mr. Ripple!"

Polly groaned, pulled herself up with a thin, glassy smile and ran into Ripple's arms. She felt Ripple's grasp relax as he looked beyond her and inevitably took in the remaining occupants of the compartment. Thereupon she redoubled the strength of her embrace. She pressed her hot brow against his cool, smooth collar—and waited.

"Polly," Ripple said, "I don't understand."

"No, Louden," Polly replied faintly, "I—I don't either."

"Perhaps you will tell me how you came to be here?" Ripple inquired.

Polly was thinking of all the things she would give up if a gentle Providence would assist her this one time. That emerald brooch—she didn't need it after all; and the Hawaiian trip, which Louden had said he would have to think about, she would gladly forego; and she would invite Louden's half-aunt Clementine, whom she detested—

"Polly," Ripple began in the frozen tone of portentous familiarity.

Polly's arms slipped from his neck. She faced the three men with transparent vivacity. "You see, Louden," she said, as if were offering the most obvious of solutions to a nursery riddle, "I was in the sleeper behind, sleeping there, I mean, and it was switched off; but I wasn't in it when it was switched off, because I was in the dressing-room of this car." Her eyes were very wide and guileless. Under other conditions her brief, light laughter would have been universally infectious. "Then Judge Goddard very kindly put his drawing-room at my disposal. Wasn't it charming?"

Ripple looked from one to another of the unusual group. His glance rested on Polly with safeguarding reproof, but when it shifted to the others his eyes snapped electrically and his lips curled in satirical omniscience. He listened quietly to Goddard's easy, graceful phrases of explanation, and said with brackish softness of voice, "Accept my thanks."

Polly was smiling absently, with a fine

perpendicular line between her brows. The suggester of political solidification seemed as comfortable as a Tennessee mountaineer at an Esperantist Convention.

"You will understand," Ripple said to Goddard, "that my surprise was caused not by my wife's acceptance of your courtesy, but by finding her in attendance on a conference as surprising as that which has evidently taken place."

Polly jumped. The expression permits of no dignifying. She assumed so-immediate an attitude of bristling contrariety that the expectant attention of the men was given her wholly.

"I was not!" she cried. "Judge Goddard and—and this gentleman were in the section just outside the door; they didn't come in until—" Polly suddenly stopped. She looked beseechingly at Goddard. Goddard glared at the visitor.

"Until some one saw me coming?" Ripple asked quietly. He seemed about to speak further, yet he hesitated, his lips parted.

"Please, Louden!" Polly entreated.

Perhaps if Ripple had been given the opportunity to take counsel of himself and his powers of control, he would have said nothing more; yet when Polly spoke, pleading for discretion and restraint, he seemed urged to instant intractability. Any firm-chinned young man is apt, however, to be disastrously irritated at finding his wife flanked not only by one political opponent, but two—two whose foregathering is suggestive of everything inimical to his hopes and aspirations—to say nothing of his lover's-days' fear of one of them, or of the dressing-gown which in every line announced its frivolous insufficiency. Under the circumstances he could say nothing to Polly, but on the heads of those whose presence deprived him of that inestimable privilege, he poured out an infinitesimal portion of the resentment which clearly filled him.

"I have an idea," he said to Goddard, "that you have won the campaign for us."

"Indeed?" Goddard inquired courteously.

"The right-thinking members of your

party wont stand for this!" Ripple turned accusingly to the uncomfortable visitor: "Or of yours either, Westford! A secret meeting between you two gentlemen can mean nothing but a deal between the regulars. Do you think I shall keep the fact to myself? By tomorrow night the Reform Party will far outnumber you both, and I am solicitous of the political health of the men who brought it about!"

"Louden!" Polly exclaimed.

Goddard rose and bowed low to Polly. He said to Ripple: "I sha'n't deny nor explain. You wouldn't believe me. You are quite mistaken, but that's neither here nor there. However, I am convinced that you *will* keep the 'fact' to yourself."

"Why should I?" Ripple scoffed.

"Think it over," Goddard said, as he and Mr. Boss Westford withdrew.

Alone in the drawing-room, Polly and Ripple looked at each other in undisturbed silence. Mingled with the disapproval of Ripple's inspection of his wife was a new, anxious solicitude, as if he weren't quite sure he knew this flushed, brilliantly placid Polly. Time and again he opened his lips, only to check the expected speech. Polly began to wonder to what height the damned-up diction was packing.

At length he spoke, just three words, and they were: "Polly, Polly, Polly!"

Polly's explanations were immediately inaugurated. To the last detail her trouble and embarrassment were recounted, without so much as an interjection from Ripple. She vouchsafed no information as to what she had heard of the momentous conversation, and Ripple would not ask. Her references to Goddard were no more irritatingly grateful than the conditions demanded. She did not protest Goddard's innocence of Ripple's accusation, thinking it wiser to say nothing rather than make a statement which she could not substantiate without saying too much. Nevertheless she succeeded in squaring her indebtedness to Goddard by getting into the records the honesty of Goddard's attitude toward Boss Westford and any proposal Westford might have made, stressing the



point despite Ripple's silently expressed unbelief.

Ripple seemed content with remarking, as he directed a glance out the window sufficiently cutting to level the trees along the way: "Polly, the dexterity with which you get into trouble is absolutely marvelous."

"If you think," Polly flared, "that I'll permit Ethel Webster and such people to know that I spent any part of the morning in a drawing-room section with Tom Goddard and Boss Westford, clothed in a plaster of a dressing-gown, and not so much as a handkerchief to mop my eyes with, you are very much mistaken. Understand that now, Louden!"

Whereupon Ripple sank into a state of mummiform animation, from which Polly sought later to rouse him by announcing brightly: "I think I have won Mrs. Wreaker to the Cause!" It was her solitary hope of placating him.

Ripple regarded her compassionately. "Read that," he said crisply, offering Polly the morning's copy of the newspaper reflecting the sentiment of Goddard and his party.

If Ripple's purpose in coming out to meet Polly was to break the news gently, the intervening surprises had driven him far from the first intention.

The feature article, with a caption extending across the page, dealt Polly a vital blow. Mrs. Wreaker had declared her allegiance to her own party in its fight against the Reformers. A letter to Judge Goddard, moreover, was copied, in which she promised to be in the city the next day to participate in her party's campaign as planned by Goddard.

Polly wept. Her light, sunshiny hair fell about her bowed head, with no comforting touch from the opposite seat. From the corner of her eye Polly saw and correctly valued the solemnity of Ripple's countenance. She decided that Ripple's vast aversion to tears, weak, un-suffrage-like tears, deprived her grief of its legitimate effect. She gave herself the pleasure of calling him a number of distinctly uncomplimentary things under her breath. She did not pause to analyze her failure with Mrs. Wreaker, but at

once cast about for means by which to recover her fantastical sway. Her eyes were dry long before she raised her head.

Louden's gaze was not to be trapped. Polly knew that she was the pivot of his thoughts, yet by not so much as a warm little half-glance, or even a little passing half-warm glance would he concede it. So she summoned the porter and requested telegraph forms. Ripple displayed no interest in the proceeding, but Polly became flushed with excitement as she evolved, with many archings of her fine brows and innumerable pursings of her delightful lips, two messages: one to Mrs. Ermingarde Stoll Wreaker, the other to her daughter, Miss Willie Wreaker.

Next afternoon, while she and Ripple were awaiting the arrival of the train on which the Wreakers were to come, Polly said: "I wish you wouldn't seem so aggrieved about it, Louden. There'll be so much excitement over the campaign you'll scarcely know she is in the house. They entertained me, you know; and it's only courteous that I should—"

Ripple interrupted with a jeering little laugh which sent Polly's chin immediately up. "To overlook the main opportunity!" he said.

"Do you think I should have asked Mrs. Wreaker instead of Willie?" Polly asked innocently.

"Of course!" Ripple exclaimed. "With Mrs. Wreaker a guest in my house there's no telling what her attitude might be before election day!"

"I am perfectly aware," Polly said tersely, "that you are the most persuasive person in the world. It is just possible that Mrs. Wreaker is a different type from any you have formerly persuaded; still I am terrifically sorry."

Polly turned away so that Louden might not see the suspicious brilliance of her smiles. She was exulting over the complete accord between Louden's wishes and her plans. Polly was determined that the delayed invitation should become hourly more desirable to the great lady, an eventuation which her daughter, Polly's guest, should primarily bring about.





Ripple took Polly's face in his palms, looking deep into her eyes. He looked long and understandingly. At length came the slow smile that she loved. "Polly," he said, glowingly, "you are wonderful!"

On the arrival of the train Mrs. Wreker was greeted by both Ripple and Judge Goddard. Goddard carried her off to headquarters, but not before Polly had deftly parted the heavy fog of verbosity which invariably hung about the famous feminist with an invitation to dinner that evening, immediately accepted by Mrs. Wreker. Doubtless it was the possibilities offered by the dinner that encouraged Ripple to his pleasantest manner as he escorted Miss Willie Wreker to Polly's coupé. He couldn't actually have enjoyed it, because Miss Wreker was shaped conspicuously like a cucumber, and possessed a corresponding flow of spirits.

Then began Polly's private and personal operations. Strategically speaking, her work during the next four days has the Campaign of the Valley of Virginia thrust into the useless and unregretted discard. Instead of companies and regiments, Polly used for her pawns calls, teas, bridge and auction parties, proving her rare generalship in the extent to which she permitted the glamour of it all to dazzle her guest.

Polly was especially successful in the choice of the moment for shutting the door, so to speak, in Miss Wreker's face. For reasons of her own, again and again Polly led Willie Wreker to the very portal of the social elysium, permitted her to look longingly in, and then abruptly closed the door.

It was less unfeeling than it sounds, though presumably feeling plays but a small part in the social strife. There are innumerable ways of causing an outsider to feel that she is an outsider. In the midst of a hand of bridge, for instance, three people at a table may speak of their attendance on a function which the fourth would give anything less than her hope of heaven to have been invited to. If something of the kind happens six times during an afternoon, it is safe to assume that the outsider's fun is rather thoroughly spoiled. It is only natural that the outsider, if she has ever considered the social game worth winning, vows a hot-cheeked, tight-lipped determination to become an insider at the earliest moment, no matter what the cost.

Polly handled her social wares like a wizardly showman in an Eastern bazaar, who seeks to seduce the imagination of his prospective audience by briefly flashing a strong light on first one, then another of the alluring attractions of his show. It is the showman's privilege; no one can gainsay it. Polly did it lightly, smilingly, maddeningly. She aroused in Willie Wreker's aspiring heart a longing stronger than Mr. Ponce de Leon's yearning for the bubbling, sparkling, fizzing waters of adolescence.

She made a discovery, too, in regard to the great mother of Willie. At the dinner to Mrs. Wreker on the first night of her sojourn in Denver, Polly played a trump in having as a guest Mrs. Crawford-Mills, the one woman whom outsiders, insiders and fence-palers acknowledged the leader of social life in the city; the Mrs. Crawford-Mills whom a grand duke had declared the most perfect hostess in America, who was the only living lady possessing a gold dinner set dug from her own gold mine, and who incidentally was Polly's willing and devoted aunt.

Polly was amused by watching Mrs. Wreker's keen observation of the social leader. Mrs. Wreker sat at Loudon's right, and Loudon conscientiously thrust a Reform pellet down her throat with every mouthful she swallowed. He could have made it strychnine for all the attention he had from her. She was avidly inspecting Mrs. Crawford-Mills, on the opposite side of the table. She watched her throughout the dinner, and as she watched, the Wreker platform-voice became oddly and unaccountably softened into a mere social monotone. And Polly discovered that it isn't beyond the range of reason for a great feminist leader to care for the purely feminine things, even though her life had been given to warring in the cause of woman.

Mrs. Wreker became Polly's house guest at noon of the third day. Only the Wrekers and the Ripples met at dinner in the evening. Later they motored to the Gardens, where a famous company of players was appearing. Polly gave Loudon every opportunity, contenting herself with being showman of

the bazaar—and the Gardens were well-filled with celebrities that evening.

Next morning Mrs. Wrecker, in spite of urgent telephonic invitations, refrained from going to a conference of her party leaders. In the evening she surrendered herself to the Reform arguments of Mr. Ripple, doubly bearable to be sure, because offered only at odd moments during a thoroughly charming little garden party arranged by Polly. Willie and her mother met men and women there of whom Willie had probably prattled ever since the natal hour of the soul-scorching ambition. Willie was very happy, and Mrs. Wrecker became so responsive to Ripple's argument that he was convinced he had won her. He stepped inconspicuously behind Polly's chair and told her so. Polly beamed, for Polly knew what every woman knows—eternal thanks to Mr. Barrie for making the phrase classically quotable.

"Corking, isn't it," Ripple said, "with three days yet before elections!"

"Would you like to announce it in the morning papers?" Polly asked.

"Wouldn't I!"

"Say nothing more to her to-night," Polly advised, "but stay downstairs, after we have gone up, until I call you."

As Ripple turned away, Polly beckoned him back, saying, "And Louden—"

"Yes, Polly?"

"Closer!" Polly demanded.

Ripple bent over her expectantly.

"I love you!" Polly whispered, and Ripple laughed happily.

A few hours later Polly and Willie Wrecker, in Polly's bedroom, were completing an epochal conversation. Miss Wrecker was intensely in earnest. Polly was very gentle and seemingly complaisant.

"You know, dear," Polly said, "you *know* I would if I could; but I've never asked Aunt Therese for an extra invitation. It's too important an affair. Of course *you* know that the final Crawford-Mills dinner of the season is the most terrifically exclusive affair imaginable!"

Willie's eyes shone darkly.

"I'm always there," Polly continued

indifferently, "but as to taking my friends—"

Polly paused to attach an absurd bit of ribbon to the end of her left night-braid. She threw the shining plait behind her, and took up the right half of her hair for manipulation. Willie's face became white and tragic.

"Still," Polly went on meditatively, "she would do it if I asked her; and I would ask her if—if—"

Willie Wrecker's head drew closer; Polly's met it. The epochal whispering duet held on for ten minutes. Then Willie sought her mother. After another ten minutes she returned with a simple written statement, for publication. Polly embraced her warmly, accompanied her back to Mrs. Wrecker, and gave Mrs. Wrecker the most tempestuous clasp that lady had probably received since she grew famous. Thereafter Polly went down to Ripple, waiting impatiently in the hallway below.

Ripple immediately recognized the importance of the simple statement of Mrs. Wrecker, and at once he was on his way to the newspaper offices to give a personal account of the Reform Party's acquisition of the great lady's good will and active support. When he returned, jubilant, Polly was still up. She came in from the dressing-room to find him reading with interest two heavy, square sheets which, with their envelopes, were on Polly's dressing table.

"When did you get these?" Ripple asked.

"Yesterday," Polly replied, "to be on the safe side."

They were invitations to Mrs. Wrecker and Miss Wrecker to attend the last of the infinitely desirable Crawford-Mills dinners.

Ripple took Polly's face in his palms, looking deep into her eyes. He looked long and understandingly. At length came the slow smile that she loved.

"Polly," he said glowingly, "you are wonderful!"

"Oh, no," Polly laughed, eluding his arms, "I am merely—in a very small and harmless way—merely a diluted diplomat!"

# Tim the Grappler

One of the stories told  
at "Mother Monohan's"

by  
FREDERICK R. BECHDOLT

Author of "Lighthouse Tom," etc.

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ILLUSTRATED BY W. H. D. KOERNER

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**M**IKE POWERS, whose eyes are weary with the wisdom of the "front office," joined our circle in Mother Monohan's early this evening. It was snug here, around the stove; and the storm outside had driven the grey-haired detective from the city front, where he and his partner prowled at all hours in their endless search for evil doers. A heavy-footed man, direct in manner, but owning that Irish shrewdness which gets under men's skins and behind their thoughts until it finds—instinctively—primal motives.

As usual he pulled up his chair close to the fire and began nursing a thick, black cigar. Like the faces of the four old sea-faring men to whose yarns he had often listened, his face was brown from wind and weather. But it had a sort of weighty sophistication which theirs did not possess.

"How's things at the central station?" asked Rose, the grizzled mate.

"Quiet," said Mike Powers; "quiet as a church."

This was a time-worn formula; and, now that it had been gone through with, we all smoked on in silence. Each man of us was ready for the inspiration which should give him and his yarn the

floor. The rain swished against the windows; the firelight flickered comfortably upon the wall. Now it reddened the life-buoy from the lost *Rio de Janeiro*; again it played upon the rusty harpoon from a forgotten New Bedford whaler.

"Wet night," said Duffy, the bartender, yawning and stretching his arms until his flannel shirt seemed about to split over his big chest. No one replied. The smoke wreaths began to form a thick cloud, through which I could dimly see the albatross, its wings outspread, behind the bar.

A short and burly old man, who had been sitting apart from us for the last half hour, rose from his chair and rolled over to the bar. Duffy went to attend upon his wants. He wore much-patched oilskins and hip sea-boots; his face was all lined like a gnarled oak knot. In silence he waited for his drink, which Duffy gave him mutely. It was a nightly custom; yet this ancient *habitué* never came into our circle, nor offered comment.

Mike Powers glanced around at him; and, as he was departing, waved his hand.

"Evening, Tim," said Mike; "any luck to-day?"

The other, in the doorway now, an-






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We had taken him out of the cell and old Cap and I had gone at him.

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swered over his shoulder, "Nothin' doin'," said he; "but the marnin' tide is pretty sure to fetch more than its share." His voice was harsh as a rusty hinge.

Now this greeting and answer were not new to me; and I had fallen to wondering over the taciturn, gnarled man who croaked such optimism. On previous occasions there had been talk on other affairs, preventing the inquiry which I made, this time unhindered.

"Who is he?" Mike Powers repeated. "Why, Son, that's Tim the Grappler. Everybody knows *him*."

"Aye," said Duffy, resuming his seat, "he's an old timer, he is."

"Always a-lookin' for something on the next tide," said old Rose. "Did you ever take notice of that, mates?"

Mike Powers nodded, puffing contentedly at his cigar. The itching curiosity, over what that offering of the morning tide might be, had been aroused before. I hurried my next question lest some foreign subject should interject itself. "What does he get from the tide?"

"Why, when it comes to that," said Mike Powers slowly, "he gets his living; his meat and drink. Tim the Grappler is what ye would call a char-

acter. He owns a skiff and a boat-hook and a pair o' grappling irons. He prowls along the city front picking up what San Francisco bay gives up to him: a bunch of piles that broke away from some raft; an oar or two; or maybe a patch of copper sheathing that he fishes off of the bottom. Such things as them are his regular finds. Now and then the luck runs poor; and he'll go a long time without anything to speak of. Then it changes; and he gets something big."

"And that?" I asked.

"Usually a floater," said Mike Powers calmly. "Tim the Grappler fishes seven out of every ten that are found off the wharves. Ye know the law: ten dollars apiece from the coroner. Floaters is the big thing with the Grappler. He keeps close tab on the missing persons items in the papers; and he has the wash of the tides and the set of the currents down that fine that he can tell ye just where a man or woman will fetch up if ye will tell him where they went into the bay. Yes sir, kedge anchors and the like are good finds for Tim; and ye'll often see him in Darby Laydon the diver's office, selling one of them. But when ye run acrost the old boy at the morgue or testifying before the coroner's jury, then ye can bet he has made



a week's wages in one grab wit' the boathook."

Mike smiled at me, and I fancy my face must have showed the aversion I began to feel toward Tim the Grappler, for the smile became shrewdly quizzical.

"And so," said I, "that's the luck he's always waiting for—his hope?"

"Yes," said the detective; "that's it. And the Lord knows that The Grappler works hard enough to have a right to what the bay has took, too—pulling that skiff night and day, in all weather, most of the time a-rowing in under the wharves, where it is as dark as Egypt, with the piles thick on all sides, and the rats a-runnin' in droves overhead, and the tide a-rippin' like a mill race against the timbers—water as black as ink. He has done that for twenty years and more; until his hands are warped to the oar handles; and until he knows the set of every current and eddy, and has the secret ways of San Francisco Bay down to a fine point. And all he gets out of it is a bare living. As honest as the day is long, too. And always with a good heart; dead sure of good luck ahead, no matter how lean the pickin's have been."

"That's it," said I; "too much like a vulture."

"Now," said Mike Powers, "ye are taking a dislike again' a man because ye do not fancy his manner of makin' a living. I've knowed Tim the Grappler for a long time—ever since I was in harness down here on the city front. And I tell ye, ye are wrong. That same thing ye are kicking about; that looking for the luck that the next tide will wash and bang about among the piles for him; that there hopeful way he has of thinking is a fine, and a scarce thing. Ye'd know that if ye had walked as many beats as I have. I swear, I wish a policeman could work on that theory, instead of the opposite."

He paused and tilted back his derby hat; then, when he had puffed at his cigar for a few moments—

"If ye want," said he, "I'll tell ye a thing that happened here on the city front—I seen a part of it meself—and that will show ye the sort of a man Tim the Grappler is, down in under the thick hide of him."

He looked around the circle; and there was a general nodding of heads as Duffy said: "Spin, man. Ye've set and listened to us. It is your turn now."

Mike Powers chuckled. "Now that I come to think of it," said he, "the story *is* strange. It come through as neat and nice as if somebody had written it down. Yet I seen a part of it meself; and I tell ye, men, it is true the way I am telling it.

"It was some years ago when I was getting my first chanst at plain clothes. I'd walked a beat here on East Street for a long time; and I'd got pretty wise to the city front. There's no place in San Francisco gives an officer more chances for promotion. But it was Tim the Grappler that had helped me towards the front office. Always abroad in that skiff of his, rowing in and out among the slips and under the wharves, he'd seen and heard a lot; and he was wise to many things that were in my line. I had been in the habit of getting a word with him, ever since I was a raw probat'oner, knowing how to handle my two fists and ignorant of most everything else. Once he put me in the way of a gang of bay pirates, and once he wised me to some junk thieves. Then, one night, he run afoul of a bunch of yeggs just as they were sawing up through the planking to get into the Pacific Coast offices after the safe. He managed to row away before they heard him coming down on them; and he hunted me up. So I got credit for the pinch when it come off; and after that I worked out of Cap Daly's office.

"But that wasn't what I started to tell. The Grappler told me a part of this story, and there was a part of it that I seen meself. It all come of what the lad here was objecting to—Tim's lookin' for floaters; and from that idea of his that the luck ahead was always going to be good. It happened one wet and windy evenin' in late February, a night much like this.

"The Grappler had been out all that day; and the bay had not given him a thing. What was more, it had not passed him any luck for a week or so. He was needing something in the way of pickings pretty bad. Now there had been a



As he was bending over the gunwale, searching the black, oily water, an arm raised up from the water and Tim the Grappler give a big yell, for he seen that this woman was alive

suicide off the Oakland ferry, and the body was about due; and there was a case of a missing woman in the papers that looked likely to of been a jump into the bay. So he was out late in spite of the rain and the storm, and he was going slow with his eyes peeled for what might show.

"Although it was only evening, it was as dark as midnight because of the dirty weather. The Grappler was getting the whole of the gale in that little skiff. But he did not mind the cold and wet, being case-hardened, and as for the dark—why, he had eyes like one of them dock rats from spending so much of his time under the wharves.

"So he rowed on south down the city front, now dodging in front of some tugboat or ferry, now slipping behind and getting tossed about in its wake like a bean pod. And all the time a-looking out into the dark to see if anything showed on the black water. He told me how he was crossing the different slips, with the arc lights making blue-white streaks, and the lamps on the boats making yellow patches around about, and the tide running by the piles with that sucking noise it makes. He went in and out and in and out, and all the time headed south'ard towards home. For he had a little shack on a float down Cape Horn way, and it was high time for him to be inside of it and getting a bite to eat.

"Well, he passed the south bunkers and he had a half a mind to take a straight shoot for it and cross past the Mail docks without coming in close to the shore. But something or other made him change his mind—what it really

was, was his own stubbornness and sureness that he would get luck. So he rowed in towards the place where the north end of the new sea-wall is now.

"He had got pretty near, when he heard a splash. That is to say, he told me afterwards that he got the sound. But he did not know it at the time. Ye know the way that is? Ye catch a noise


and it makes ye look that way, and afterwards ye figure it out why ye done it. Well, so with him. He had been peering into the black night over the stern of the skiff; and now he looked straight over to his left and changed his course a bit to see the better.

"At first he seen nothing but the dark water, cut sharp by the brightness which an arc light throwed on it from the roadway, which was built out here on piles. And then he seen, drifting out like from the shadow into the glare of the street lamp on the bay, a woman's loosened hair.

"Well, he told me afterwards that he was so thankful—him being right up against it from long hard luck—that he said out loud, 'Oho, here's good fortune.' And wit' that he headed for the floating hair. Now the

party that had jumped off of the ferry boat was a man; and the party he had spotted in the missing persons column in the paper was a woman. So he was sure he had that one now. He got his skiff pointed right and pulled two or three hard strokes; and then he took another look to make sure it was still there and had not sunk.

"Well, for the moment old Tim he



He managed to get over to a pile and he tried to hang to it, with the tide a-ripping at him and the barnacles a-cutting through the thick hide of him.

thought the bay had gone back on him and took his floater away from him, for the hair was not in sight. And then as he was bending over the gunwale, searching the water, it come up once more. And as it come in sight an arm raised up from the water and Tim the Grappler give a big yell, for he seen that this woman was alive.

"Of course, he had rowed hard to catch his ten dollars. But now he did such rowing as he had never done before. He shot that skiff through the water, for he knew the set of the eddy in here and it was due to carry her in among the piles under the street. And he was quite a long ways away. So he raced for it, a-grunting at his oars.

"Well, he got there behind the current, and she was out of sight. He figured it that she would be under the timbers, and ready to go down for the third time. So he give one more crackin' heave at them oars and then he kicked off his boots and pulled off his coat. He could see nothing now; he lighted a match. And there, twenty or thirty feet away, he caught one glimpse of her hair sucking under again. He went over the gunwale and dove after her.

"Let me tell ye what that place was like, for chances are ye have never been under the wharves at night: black as blackness can be; and black water running like a mill race against the rotting piles; and every minute, showing in a new place, bunches of streaks made by the phosphorus, wriggling like bunches of snakes; the piles sticking up on all sides, covered thick with barnacles.

"That was the place. And let me tell ye, men, that is no place to dive from a small boat even in daytime, let alone in a stormy night. How much struggle old Tim the Grappler had, I do not know. I only know that he told me he was in under the water for an awful long time before he laid his hand on her hair. Then he come up, fighting the current to get himself and her to the surface. And when he had got up, holding to her hair, he had a bigger fight again to keep afloat. He managed to get over to a pile, and he tried to hang to it, with the tide a-ripping at him and the barnacles a-cutting through the thick hide of him

until the blood run. He has scars to this day.

"By good luck the skiff come a-bumping against the same pile, and Tim the Grappler had strength enough, for all the salt water that he had swallowed, and fight enough, to get his free hand on the gunwale. He worked around, and he got to the stern; and then—how he did it I cannot tell ye, for he never told me—he got himself and her aboard.

"Now that took a long time, because when they was in the skiff, him half dead and her like one dead entirely, the boat had drifted for a considerable distance, now and again fetching up in a collision with a bunch of piles and all but capsizing. So here he was, in under the street, pretty much all in, and with a woman that needed help right away.

"Being plumb wore out and having the tide against him, Tim the Grappler did not try to row back to where he could get help, and call an ambulance. He went with the current and pulled for his own shack.

"I told ye he lived in a cabin on a float down Cape Horn way. I've seen the place, many's the time. Built of odds and ends of drift wood and rusty sheet metal that he had got out of the bay; much of the wood was all marked with torpedo's borings and the whole place looked somehow as if it ought to be dripping salt water instid of dry and snug. Overhead in the rafters he had stowed away odd oars, extra boat hooks and such. He had his shake-down bed, a little cook stove, and a chair made out of a butt of a thick pile. That was where he took her.

"He piled her onto the bed and he worked over her."

Mike Powers paused and pulled a fresh cigar out of his vest pocket. He looked around our circle with his wisdom-saddened eyes. "Did any of ye ever work over a person that is close to death from drowning?" he asked. Two or three nodded. "So," he said, "ye have some idea then. As for ye, lad, let me tell ye that it is the hardest and, seeming like, the most hopeless grind a man can put himself at. There is breathing to start; there is water to empty from the lungs and pipes; and there is blood



to get to going once more, for the heart has quit trying much of anything. And no time to waste at any of them. No chance to stop and rest when yer arms are lame and yer legs are shaking under ye from weariness; just keep on and on. And the worst of it is that the job is one to break your heart, for life just *will* keep on staying away. Ye think ye are sweating at what is no use at all.

"And Tim the Grappler was not feeling any too good himself, with the arm of him raw where the barnacles had tore the hide away; and his belly filled with San Francisco bay water; and his limbs chilled. But here was a woman; and whether she lived or died was up to him.

"So he stayed with it. He stuck when it looked like he had got a coroner's case after all; and he stuck when he was sure that it would be the dead wagon that he would telephone for. He give first aid, artificial respiration and all, as he had seen them at the Harbor Emergency, many's the time.

"And at last she showed that first flutter and she tried to take the first weak little sign of a breath. And, seeing that he was winning out, he gritted his teeth and he went at it all the harder and braver. He give her some more whiskey between her teeth, and the shadow of a sign of pink begun to show in her cheeks. And he kept on. So at last she begun to do her own breathing, and old Tim he got busier stimulating the flow of blood. And in the end her heart and lungs got down to work. And she opened her eyes.

"Then he took note of her looks for the first time, because he had been too hard at work to do that before. And he seen that she was nothing but a girl, so

far as the years went. Very white and tired she looked, and that helpless that it made him pity her the more.

"Her eyes—so he told me—they opened wide and they had a frightened look, as if a-coming back



She was not yet eighteen years old; and it was summer time.

to life had scared her of what laid ahead.

"She looked that way for some time, and then she seemed to see him; and she spoke. A sort of whisper it was. And the name of a man. 'Danny,' says she, and then: 'Oh Danny,' in a weary, heart-broken way that made Tim the Grappler feel sorrow such as he had not known,



so he told me, for many, many years.

"Well, that whisper of hers got him, all right. From that time on, he was more sot than ever on doing for her, and helping her. And he said to her, 'Yes, yes,' and built a fire and got the room warm, cooking up a saucepan of broth on the stove. By the time midnight come she was able to swallow the whiskey for herself; and in the early mornin' she was able to take a bit of the broth.

"She slept for a long time and it was pretty well along in the morning when Tim the Grappler give her some more of the broth which he had kept hot on the stove for her. And while he was feeding her, he told her how he'd fished her out of the bay. She stared up at him with eyes that were saying as plain as words how she was too tired of everything to be thankful to him for his work.

"But he made her take the broth and after a while he got her to take some more. She was beginning to feel stronger, of course; and then she begun to beg him to let her go. He asked her where she would be going and what for. And she did not look him in the eye, but stared up at the rafters where he had his extra oars and boat-hooks hanging; nor did she give him any answer. So he says to her:

"'Ye would be aimin' to throw yer-self into the bay again.'

"She answered him, like she was too tired to take the trouble to lie, saying that she would.

"Then he says, taking a chance in order to draw her on to talking, says he, 'Supposin' I would go and find yer Danny fer ye?'

"Well, men, that was like he had given her some strong medicine; for she raised up in bed and her eyes got light in them. Then she fell back on the pillow again and she said, 'He's gone.'

"Tim the Grappler began to do some quick thinkin'; and he watched her now while he talked to her, sizing her up. He asked her how she knew that her man was dead. Now this was a long job of course; but he had that sympathy in him, having done for her the way he had done, and being soft hearted under that thick, rough hide of his, so that in

the end he pulled the story out of her.

"She was from the country; one of them inland towns where the church bells ring on prayer meeting evenings and all of Sunday mornings; and where the dust lays thick and soft on the side streets in summer, with roses climbing all over the porches and lawn sprinklers making the grass smell good after sundown. Maybe ye have seen such a place; they are all pretty much alike."

Mike Powers paused and smiled around at us. "Sounds like a novel, don't it?" said he.

"Go on, man, spin," said old Rose; and glancing at the grizzled mate, I saw in his steady eyes a far-away look, as if he had perhaps gone back to his own distant boyhood.

"All right!" Mike Powers settled himself in his chair.

"She had always lived in that town, and her mother was dead. Her father was preacher in one of them churches; from what she told Tim, he was, without any doubt about it, one of those men who is sure everybody is going straight to hell unless they think the way he does.

"Now the old man was strict, of course; and she did not go about any too much. Dancing and the like were not for her. And what with keeping house for her father, when she grew old enough, and attending all the missionary meetings, she seen more of old women than she did of her own age. As for the lads, there was naturally nothin' doing.

"What I mean—and that is the way the Grappler sized up from her story—she grew up shy. I have seen that kind more than once. Let me tell ye, men, a girl like that has one idea tucked away in the back of her head, one that she is always a-thinking of. She don't dare to own it up to herself but is sort of afraid of it while she hopes. That idea is a man; the man that will come and take her away.

"Well, he came all right. She was not yet eighteen years old; and it was summer. They were installing some sort of a power plant in the place. This here Danny was an electrician—a slip of a lad come twenty-one, fresh from Frisco.

He was getting good wages, as wages goes in the city; and that was more than any young fellow was getting in that town. Good looking; and of course he used to dress the best he knew how when he was off of the work. Then he would take a turn about to see what he could see. And he seen her.

"I can't tell ye anything of the manner of their meeting or of the courting; and when it comes to that, what would be the use? There is always the one story for such things. One rule, and it goes as sure as shooting.

"Now he was her first lad; and on top of that, her father was like I told ye he was. This made her have to see her Danny on the sly. Consequence, the boy was a sort of a tin god to her. And he, being used to the girls here in town, looked on her as a sort of an angel, because she was so simple along with her prettiness.

"Well the summer went along and the job got done with and Danny went back to Frisco, and she thought her heart would break. They wrote to each other, and that was on the sly because of the preacher being so strict. And then one fine day, there was her Danny back again.

"He had come for her. She walked with him on the street, and she got a scolding for it from her father.

"They run away one night and they went to another inland town; and she lied about her age, giving it as past eighteen when they got the license. Then they were married. And they went on to Frisco. Having told that lie and having eloped, the two of them were as scared as if they had broke the safe of the town bank to get their expense money. They looked to be arrested if ever her father found their trail.

"That, men, is the end of the first chapter of this story. And I have seen that same thing a-many times since I have worked out of the Central Station, where all the troubles are reported. A-many and many a time I have heard it. And the next chapter is very likely to come under one of two heads: desertion or what we call 'white slavery.' But this yarn of mine is one that does not follow the rules.

"Here she was in the city for the first time. She lived in a lodging house; a good neighborhood, but crowded. Noise of the cars and all that; and she was not used to it. San Francisco scared her. She told Tim the Grappler it looked so hard to her! And she had that fear because of having lied to get her marriage license. And Danny, he did not say much to her about it, but he was afraid too. Afraid of the preacher finding them out and arresting them.

"There was not much time for being frightened over them things though; and she was just getting her first good, big homesickness. Three days in Frisco; and then one fine morning Danny went away and did not come back.

"Ye can figure that out for yourselves, men. Setting there alone in the one room, waiting for his step, and never hearing it. Afraid to talk to anybody. Afraid of the city. And the next day come, and went by; and more days after that, dragging along. No Danny, and no word from him.

"She did not even know the name of the firm he worked for. He had gone and he did not come back. And she was all by herself. She did not dare to go back home. There was her father, strict and savage.

"She did not go to the police for help, because she had that fear of what the two of them had done. She just set there and waited. And he did not come; nor did he send any word.

"Well, there was ten days of this; and what money he had left with her was all used up. And she was sick from waiting. So she cast it all up in her poor little head—and then she made a straight run for the bay. Then Tim the Grappler got her.

"Well, Tim the Grappler told me that he sat there a minute or two after she had finished; and he thought to himself. And the more he thought, the more certain he was that there was still a show. That habit he had got into of always looking for the luck to come, when good fortune had been staying away for a long time, was sort of second nature with him. So, at last, he says:

"'Mebbe ye should of waited another day for him!'

"She only shook her head from side to side on the pillow, and she says again, 'No, he is dead. He would never stay away from me if he was alive. My Danny!'"

"Now it had been sort of bothering old Tim in the back of his head that this here Danny might not be as good as she had thought he was. And he did not know how to get at it with her. It kept sticking though; and he said something to her, asking her some question or other, that made her understand. And that made the red come into her cheeks, she being angry at anyone thinking that of her man. And says she, 'If ye had ever seen him, ye would know better than to think such a thing as that.'"

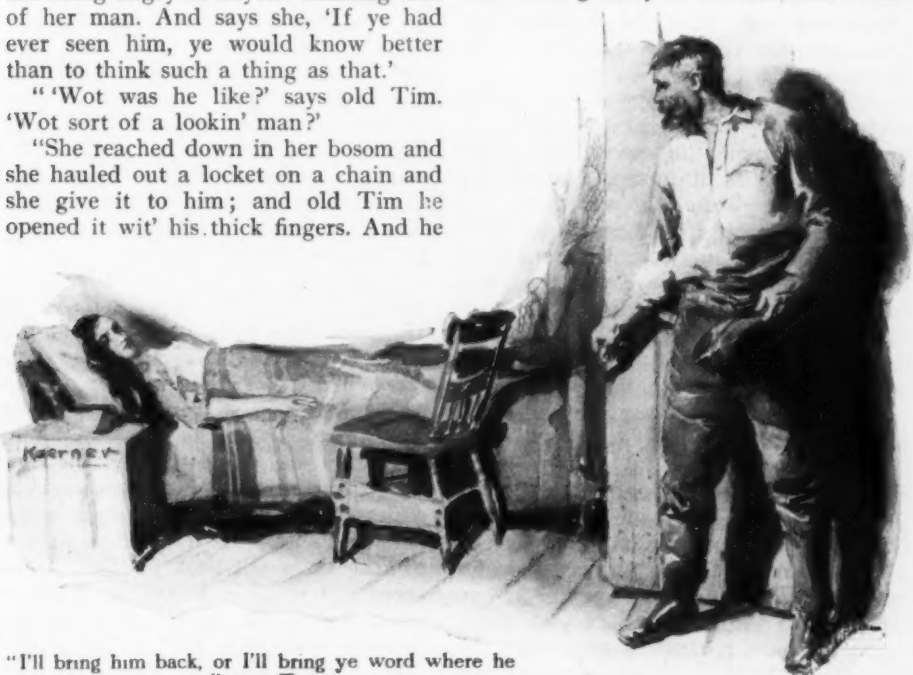
"'Wot was he like?' says old Tim. 'Wot sort of a lookin' man?'"

"She reached down in her bosom and she hauled out a locket on a chain and she give it to him; and old Tim he opened it wit' his thick fingers. And he

so in the end he got set and obstinate about it. And then he made a bargain wit' her. It was this:

"She should promise him to wait for him; and he would go and hunt for her Danny. And while he was gone, she must stay right there and do herself no harm. He had become that dogged about it that he says, 'I'll bring him back, or bring ye word where he is.' With that he left her, taking the locket along with him.

"It was a case of comb down San Francisco for one man. I have done the same thing many is the time, and let me



"I'll bring him back, or I'll bring ye word where he is," says Tim.

seen Danny's picture. There was no getting away from that: as honest a lad, if looks meant anything, as ever walked.

"Tim the Grappler hung onto the locket, and he says, 'He never done ye wrong, that lad.'"

"And then he changed the manner of his argument, sticking close to that idea of his own, that good luck is never gone but is always bound to be a-waiting on the next tide. And he tried his best to hearten her up with his words. And talking made him surer of what he said,

tell ye, it is no child's play. This city is big; and ye have to be wise. That's where Tim got off right, for he was wise. Blind hope don't get a man anything of itself, ye understand.

"Now when he started out, The Grappler had one thing a-running in his head, so he told me afterwards. It was some words of hers. She says to him when they were arguing, 'Only death can part us; that's what Danny has kept telling me; only death can part us.' And Tim told me that those words hung

to him along with his own idea—that if ye stayed with it, good luck was likely waiting on the next tide.

"So he went to it. And he went to it proper. And he stuck. I will not bother ye telling how he done it and where he went. Only he used a system, like a man should on such a hunt.

"He laid out his work this way: Morgue, hospitals and city prison. When ye have gone through all them three—and if the time has gone by for the bay to give up a body—ye are pretty sure of getting your party unless he has ducked out of his own accord, or been murdered and the body planted some place. So the Grappler started with the morgue.

"Nothing of Danny on the slabs. After that the emergency hospitals. It took a long time, the longer because old Tim was short of money through not having had good luck lately; and he had to walk. He took them all in, from the Panhandle down to the city front and from Tar Flat to Telegraph Hill. And when he had got done with them and had not seen a face like the one he was hunting for, and had not found a record of his man on the slips of ten days past, he was weary enough and half way ready to lose heart.

"Then he sat down in a cheap lunch counter to eat a bite; and while he was waiting for his order, he took a look at the marnin' paper. As usual he turned by habit to the news of missing persons. Ye know there is always an item or two anyhow; and Tim the Grappler could spot them the minute his eyes lit on the headlines. Well, men, he seen one little paragraph that made the blood run to his head, and he spilt his coffee turning the pages over to get at it in a hurry. It come from the central station, a report sent in to the chief of police by mail, the way they always do from them country towns. And it was the preacher, describing his daughter and asking the police to find her, and to tell her that if she would only write to him or come home that he would forgive her.

"When Tim the Grappler read that, he told me he made up his mind that this here Danny could not be dead. For if he should be, that would be too bad

luck to happen to anybody.

"Well, he took in the police stations; the precinct stations first. And by the time he had walked them rounds, his short, stumpy legs was very tired and his feet was sore. And at last he come to the Central Station.

"He looked over the big book, and he studied out the names for ten days past; and when he come to one that looked like it might fit the bill—like the lad would of been pinched and give a bum name, ye understand—he pumped the questions to the desk sergeant; or mebbe he took a trip downstairs to the door of the city prison. But it was no use.

"Then Tim the Grappler sat down and he thought of me. As I told ye, I was just beginning to work in plain clothes then. The Grappler went to the front office, and I was not in. Fact is I was in Cap Daly's office—he was chief of detectives then—and when he heard that, the old boy he went straight acrost the hall and asked for me.

"Now Cap Daly had an inner office, where he done his work, and he had an outer office where his secretary held down a desk and answered 'phone and received callers. The Grappler told the secretary what he wanted and he sat down in the outer office to wait for me when I would come through the door.

"Now as for me, I was good and busy with old Cap Daly, doing a bit of sweating. Them were the days when we used to keep the small book pretty full, and keeping a prisoner locked up while we got a line on him was a more common practice than it is now. I had a hard case; and old Cap and I were trying to deal with it.

"Ye see I was good and ambitious, being new to plain clothes. I'd made what I thought was a good pinch. Got the man on the photograph sent up from Los Angeles two weeks before. What was more, I'd picked him up before we had had the mug on file more than three or four days.

"I'd made the pinch down on Montgomery street, and the wanted man was a bank sneak. From the start-off he would not say one word. Every day we had taken him out of the cell and old Cap and I had gone at him; sometimes



rough and sometimes easy; sometimes coaxing and sometimes trying to bluff him. And do ye think he would say anything about where he'd come from? Not one syllable. He just sat tight.

"To-night we was at it in the inner office, and Tim the Grappler was setting outside the door a-waiting for me. And at last old Cap Daly he nodded to me and says, 'Take him back and let him soak again.' So I got up and went out wit' the prisoner.

"Well, as we went through the room, I felt a tug on my coat; and I looked around. There was Tim the Grappler. He told me he wanted to see me on important business. I mind that I was sort of aggravated at the idea of any other case, being full of this one. But I told him I'd be back directly. So, when I got my man to the jailer, I come straight. Then old Tim told me his troubles.

"When he'd got done with the whole story and had described his own hunt, I told him that I did not see where else he could look. 'Chances are,' says I, thinking of the run of such cases, 'he's ditched her and beat it for some other part of town.'

"'No, Mike,' says Tim the Grappler, 'I had that idea bothering me a bit until I seen his picture. I brought it along for identification.'

"With that he showed me the locket. Well, men, there was the photograph of my prisoner!

"I couldn't believe it at first. And when I seen that it *was* true, I was still stubborn. Suspicious, that was it. Yes sir, I was. A policeman gets so that he does not believe anybody, ye see. And this was my first plain-clothes case.

"But I got a slant at Tim the Grappler's old face a-looking up at me honest as the day is long. And I knew that I had got off on the wrong foot when I made that pinch. And, says I, 'Why in the dickens would he sit so tight?'

"'Who?' says old Tim.

"I seen then that he was not wise to my prisoner, and it was not strange either, for ten days soaking in jail and sweating, does not help a man's appearance. Well, I knew; and so I told him.

"I took Tim in to old Cap Daly and old Cap listened to the whole story

like I had done, and he seen the locket. And then he turned to me. 'Scared of bein' pinched for eloping and for perjury when they got the licence,' says he.

"With that, Tim the Grappler showed us the item he had clipped from the morning paper. So we did the one thing there was to do. I went downstairs again to the city prison and I got my man, this here Danny.

"Well, old Cap give him a few hard plain words about what a fool he had been for not telling who he was; and that way put the best face on it for the department. And when ye come to it, the Los Angeles likeness was very close to a double for him; and them was the days before Bertillion in our department. So we weren't so much to blame after all."

Mike Powers paused.

"Well?" said old Rose. "Go on."

"That's all," said the detective. "Only Tim the Grappler took the lad away wit' him; and I went along wit' the two at Cap Daly's orders to see that it was all on the square." He paused again and smiled; but his eyes were sad with their huge burden of wisdom. Then:

"It was on the square all right," he said; "no doubt about that. When the two of them come together down there in Tim the Grappler's shack, he made a run for the bedside; and all she could say was just, 'Danny! Danny!' when she throwed her arms around him. But, men, ye should of heard the voice of her as she said it.

"Tim the Grappler and I, we heard it, and we shut the door and stayed outside on the float wit' the rain a-soaking us for a long time. Them two young people is living in Frisco now; and they are happy."

When the story had ended and we had all been silent for a long time, old Rose spoke at last.

"Funny," said he, "ye cannot tell what is under the hide of a man. Old Tim the Grappler! Well! well!"

As for myself, I had no comment. I remembered how that story had started and I felt a little ashamed of my own snap judgment.

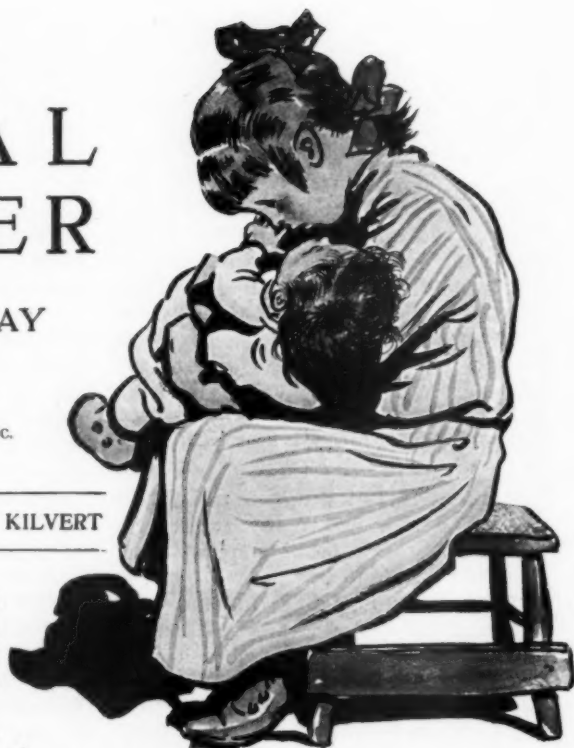


# The CORAL FINGER

By MARY IMLAY  
TAYLOR

Author of "Pink Lollypops," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY B. CORY KILVERT



**L**UCIA clasped the baby close in her thin little arms, rocking it gently to and fro while she crooned over it.

"Mamina," she said softly, "is nod thees Pepinella the mos' sweetest *bambina* in the world?"

Anna Mazarella wiped a tear from her own thin cheek.

"Si," she replied sadly, "but she will die, our Pepinella, she ees so seeck now, and I—notheeng thad I do will heal her; id ees becose of thad coral finger thad I sold."

Lucia looked down at the wan little face of her baby sister and her lip quivered.

"I think she is better, Mamina," she cooed lovingly; "I think she getta well soon."

Anna shook her head despondently.

"Id ees me," she said. "I am a verra wicked woman. I sold the coral finger; ever sinze then there has been bad luck—*miseria!* First you fell down cel' and hurt your foot; then I have thad grad finger swell, and now—id ees our Pepinella. Sinze your fathaire died I hav' never such bad luck ad all. While he lived," she added softly, her face tenderly sorrowful, "id waz nod so. *Proprio un angelo*—your fathaire!"

—B. CORY KILVERT—

"Mamina," she said softly, "is nod thees Pepinella the mos' sweetest *bambina* in the world?"

Lucia rocked Pepinella, thinking deeply. It was all true, even to her mother's swollen finger; Anna had made no crotchet-work to sell for a week now and the faithful little girl, trudging out every day to peddle the wonderful mats and tidies and yards of lace crochet-work, had nearly exhausted their slender supply, and the work brought so little money that there had never been any to put by for the rainy day that had come upon them with the inconvenience of all calamities.

Five years before, the little family—Luigi Mazarella, shoe-maker and worker in leather goods, his wife Anna, and the child Lucia, then only three years old—had come from that far sweet land of Tuscany. There the figs ripened on the sunny slopes and there were strawberries. But they were not for the poor; Anna had never tasted them until she

bought the stale ones at Mona Lisa's stand on Grand Avenue, in this smoky city of New Haven.

She thought, indeed, that the figs ripened on the hills of Tuscany for the *forestieri* only, but at first in this strange land Luigi did well and there were strawberries, sometimes, and greens and a *brodo* of meat more often, and then Pepinella was born and Anna tied the coral finger about her neck to insure good fortune and to protect her from evil. But, despite this potent charm, the chill of this strange cold city fell on Luigi; it was like a blight; he began to cough and to work less and less, and they had to move from the little shop in the cellar to the attic.

Then the days came when he worked not at all and Anna began to crochet her wonderful lace-like edging. With Pepinella on her knees and her husband dying in the attic, the Italian woman worked, her deft fingers handling the slender ivory crochet-needle with all the art and patience of her countrywomen, and at last the work began to sell.

At first Anna carried it from door to door herself; then, as Luigi grew steadily worse, Lucia carried it, and when he was dead and the baby sickened there was only the little girl to peddle day by day, sometimes returning empty handed, but more often selling one or two quaint bits of work that were like lace.

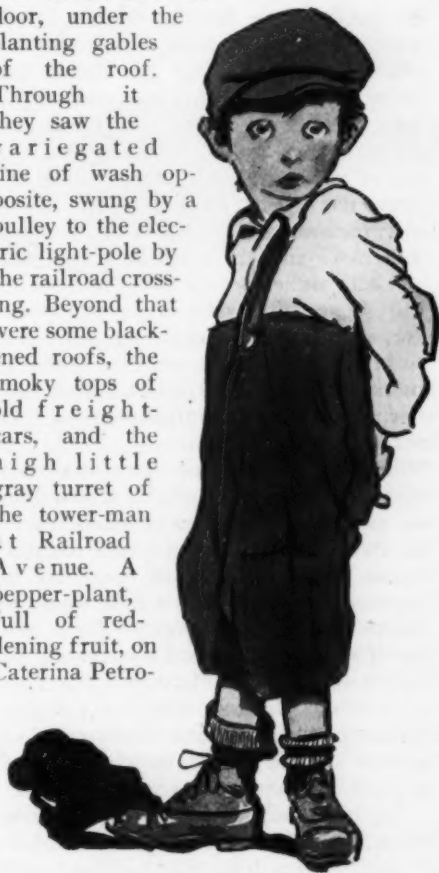
Now, in the little hot attic with the sick child in her arms, Lucia remembered the days when her father had brought them strawberries and even hoky-poky; it seemed to her a period of dazzling prosperity. Red strawberries, a little acid and gritty, but still strawberries! Lucia sighed, nestling her cheek against the baby's moist dark curls and regarding the worn Italian woman, her mother, who was slowly preparing some macaroni, mixing it with the strong smelling cheese that they loved—*caccio-carollo*.

"Mamina," said Lucia, "why did you sell thad coral finger?"

Anna scraped the piece of cheese mechanically. "A signora, a rich signora, ad the Settlement House, she wanta thad

I sell the coral finger; she offer me five dollar for id; I—what could I do?" Anna flung out deprecating hands, arguing with space, as she always did. "I am a *poverina*; I took thad money, and ad once all thees world go wrong. Id waz the charm for good luck that I put in my *bambina's* cradle; id ees against the Evil Eye, and I sold id. And now my Pepinella, my *figliuola*, she ees so seeck thad she will die!" Anna covered her face with her toil-worn hands and the slow tears trickled through her fingers.

Pepinella, stirring in Lucia's arms, began to whimper after the manner of sick babies. The hot summer air, coming in at the attic window, seemed only to reach their feet, for the small opening was level with the floor, under the slanting gables of the roof. Through it they saw the variegated line of wash opposite, swung by a pulley to the electric light-pole by the railroad crossing. Beyond that were some blackened roofs, the smoky tops of old freight-cars, and the high little gray turret of the tower-man at Railroad Avenue. A pepper-plant, full of red-denning fruit, on Caterina Petro-



—B-WAY KILGAT—

Gigi was hot and unpoetical. "Aint it fierce?" he said

nello's window across the alley, furnished the only bit of life and color, while the air was redolent with garlic, toasted cheese, smoke and kippered herring.

Pepinella's whimper became a moaning wail and she beat her little hot hands against Lucia's breast and panted for breath. Anna snatched her up, soothing her with kisses and tears, murmuring unintelligible words to her in her soft, sweet Italian.

Lucia still meditated. "Mamina, if we could bud get the coral finger again she would be well, our Pepinella?"

Anna nodded. "Immediate," she said; "so fast that we would nod know when she waz seeck, *poverina mia!*"

The little girl went to a loose board in the floor, in the far corner, under which her mother always hid the worn old leather purse that her father had brought from Italy. Anna, preoccupied with the baby, did not notice her, and Lucia counted the slender store. One dollar and eighty-two cents. Plainly that could not be converted into five. Besides, one had to have either macaroni or *minestra*; and there was the rent-man.

Lucia sighed softly and put back the old purse. Then she crept downstairs, forgetful of the savory dish of macaroni in the oven. As she went she heard her mother singing sweetly to the sick baby, her melancholy contralto tender as a carress.

The door at the foot of the stairs was open and the broken old back gate hung on one rusty hinge. Lucia wandered out on the railroad ties and gazed disconsolately at the old white goat on the opposite shore of the cinder-blackened inlet. Plainly there was no help here, yet if she could but find the signora who had bought the coral finger! Surely, in a case of life and death, the signora would give back the fateful charm. Even a rich signora would be afraid to kill a baby by keeping the coral finger.

So it seemed to Lucia, still standing there, a forlorn little figure in an old striped cotton dress that had been made originally for Gretchen Eisenbaum. The rich Signor Eisenbaum sold beer at the corner, and Gretchen's outgrown frocks

clad the less fortunate children of the neighborhood, and Lucia, being five sizes smaller, had the appearance of a collapsed cotton umbrella. But there was pathos in the little ivory-tinted face, the hazel eyes, with their wonderful curled lashes, and the small pleading mouth. Lucia was not a beauty, like Rosa Palmieri and Margherita Gettini, but she had a soft, beguiling voice and the face of tears.

A freight train backed slowly past her, but she viewed it with unseeing eyes. She was still considering the possibilities of finding an unknown signora with a coral finger when she was startled by the appearance of Giulia and Gigi Popolizio on the crossing.

Giulia waved to her.

"Buon giorno, Lucia," she called out sweetly. "It is warm this day."

Gigi was hot and unpoetical. "Aint it fierce?" he said.

Lucia ran over to them. "Giulia," she said, tearfully, "do you know a signora with a coral finger?"

Giulia shook her head. "I know a ver-ra rich signora who has a gold tooth," she replied. "You would nod so believe, but it is true."

"It shines lika anything," added Gigi, "and she aint gotta but five others; I counted."

"If I do nod find the signora thad bought the coral finger, then Pepinella, our *bambina*, will die," said Lucia solemnly.

In a gust of sympathy Giulia dropped her package of spaghetti on the railroad ties and flung her arms around Lucia. Gigi sniffed; his sex made him ashamed of the tear that trickled down his chin, leaving a little white streak like a chalk river on a blackboard.

"Can't you buy 'em, Giulia?" he suggested hoarsely. "Aint there no more coral fingers, same as lady fingers, in the bake-shop?"

Lucia's tears fell faster. "I have nod the money!"

Giulia considered; her heart was big and there was room in it for Lucia's troubles. She drew her brows together in a deep line of thought. Then a sudden inspiration swept the clouds from her

small brown face, for there was always a silver lining to the cloud.

"Gigi," she cried, "there is the *porcellino*!"

Gigi, the materialist, stared. "Pigs aint gotta no coral fingers," he said.

"But people thad has coral fingers will give them for un *piccolo porcellino*," retorted Giulia joyfully; "and Grandpa Pape, he said thad he would pay any boda ad all to take away thad pig; thad it was a nuisance, a pestilence, a bandit; that it digged up his dandelions. We will then give that *porcellino* to any signor or signora who has a coral finger."

"Oh, Giulia!" Lucia gasped, deep in gratitude and wonder, "you must be ver-  
ra rich nod to eat the *porcellino* with beets."

"I do nod eat pigs," replied Giulia, with dignity; "they has tails."

"So has goats," said Gigi.

"I do nod eat goats," retorted Giulia.



Gigi sprawled full length, holding the squealing pig by one hind leg.

"'Cause you is scairt of 'em," said Gigi.

"I aint," his sister rejoined, with just indignation; "an' when I eats goats, then I'll eat yours—so there!"

Gigi howled dismally. "You aint goin' to eat my goat noways," he said. "I'll tell Grandpa Pape Popolizio on you."

"Grandpa Pape Popolizio has eaten kids," she retorted, with triumph; "but you help me and Lucia with the *porcellino* and then maybe I wont eat your old goat."

Gigi sobbed. "I don't wanta the *porcellino*," he wailed. "I wanta my goat, Lager Beer!"

Giulia took Lucia's hand. "Come," she said eagerly, "me and you and Gigi will harness up the goats and put the *porcellino* in the cart and we will sell him to a signor for a coral finger."

Lucia's face shone with hope, yet a

doubt pricked. "If only the signor has a coral finger!"

"There is a signor on Grand Avenue who has watches and rings and big stones thad shine lika night fire-crackers and"—Giulia hesitated reminiscently—"and also false teeth."

"I aint goin' there!" said Gigi firmly. "Grandpa Pape beata me for buying there his false teeth—I aint goin'."

"Sh!" said Giulia. "We aint going to buy false teeth but a coral finger. You go and catch thad pig."

They had been trudging out Grand Avenue and were now approaching the Popolizio cottage near the river bank. Opposite were the coal yards and the long wharves piled high with pyramids of whitening oyster shells.

A big schooner lay at the pier; a derrick working in

the hold hauled up the huge buckets laden with oysters and dumped them on the wharf; and there men toiled to and fro with wheel-barrows, like overladen ants. Across the muddy road stood the little weather-beaten shanty, with the two goats, a pig and a tall white rooster in the small back yard. A discouraged garden, filled with pepper plants, garlic and celery, tried to grow the other side of a weak wire fence, but the little pig had wriggled under the fence, and he now lay wallowing in dandelions.

"Eh, you!" cried Gigi wildly, "you scat, you *porcellino*! Where now is Grandpa Pape? My Grandpa Pape, he would beata you, you ruffian!"

But Grandpa Pape was in town, and his son, the father of the two children, was at work on the trolley to Guilford, so Giulia and Lucia proceeded to hitch the two white goats to the express cart,



while Gigi was engaged in trying to corner the very small, very fat and very lively pig. On the third round Gigi sprawled full length, holding the squealing pig by one hind-leg.

"Put him ad once in thad cart," Giulia commanded, impatient of delay.

"If I lets go he goes," replied Gigi fiercely; "an' I aint goin' to catcha no more pigs for no coral fingers."

"Lucia," said Giulia, with dignity, "me and you must put the *porcellino* into the carriage."

Lucia shrank a little. "Does he bite yet?" she asked, timidly.

"I aint goin' to hold on a minute longer!" said Gigi.

Giulia grasped the pig firmly and deposited it, still squealing, in the express cart. Gigi wriggled to his knees, very dirty and very angry.

"Me, I don't lika pigs," he said.

Meanwhile Giulia found that the pig would not stay in the wagon; there was a struggle and she flung both arms around the animal's fat, wriggling body.

"Gigi," she said, "you'll have to get in and hold the *porcellino*; me and Lucia will drive the goats."

"Wont!" said Gigi.

Giulia looked at him desperately; the pig plunged and squealed. Lucia began to sob.

"If the *porcellino* is nod in the cart we cannod get the coral finger!" she wailed, "and Pepinella—she—she will die!"

Giulia climbed heroically into the little express cart and, holding the pig firmly in her arms, assumed the air of a martyr. "Now," she said, "Gigi, you drive the goats, and, Lucia, you walka beside of me and look for the signora with the coral finger."

The little procession started. It made its way safely around the corner into Grand Avenue. The noon hour was over and at first even the squeals of the *porcellino* passed unheeded.

It was a high yellow express wagon which Pape Popolizio had procured with three hundred soap wrappers, and Giulia's knees approached her chin. From under her left arm appeared a fat hind leg and a curly tail; under the other elbow was a flat pink nose; the squeals floated behind them like the siren notes of a motor-car. But Giulia was calm, for as long as she could hold the *porcellino* there was hope, hope of a rich signora, a coral finger and a miraculously recovered *bambina*.

Encouraged by success, Gigi the charioteer began to whip up the two plethoric white goats, and Lucia had to run to keep abreast of Giulia and the pig.

"Gigi," she sobbed, breathless, "please do nod drive so fasta."

"It aint me," retorted the charioteer. "It is the *porcellino*. The goats is scairt of it; aint it squealing fierce?"

It surely was. The frantic little squeaks drew a crowd of ragged urchins, and the jeweler came to the door of his shop when the goats halted at the curb, Gigi hanging madly to the reins to keep them still.

"Signor," said Giulia sweetly, over the pig's head, "we desire to sella this *porcellino* for a coral finger."

The signor was indignant. "You take that pig away!" he shouted. "Coral fingers? I have no coral fingers! You clear out!"

"Signor," replied Giulia mildly, "you do nod to understand. Pepinella Mazarella is verra sick, a coral finger—"

"You get out!" interrupted the angry signor. "I'm not running a free circus! You get!"

The goats obeyed, dragging Gigi, and as they galloped on, Lucia ran behind them sobbing.

"He has no coral finger; he is nod the signor with the coral finger!"

Giulia made no reply; she was holding the pig. Besides, she felt so sure that they would get a coral finger while they had the *porcellino* to exchange for it.

A little farther on there was a better shop with larger and more alluring win-







"Arresto my porcellino," he shouted. "Stop him!"

dows. There were watches, clocks, rings, scarf-pins and antiques.

"Stop, Gigi!" Giulia cried. "You sit right down and hold on. Thad'll stop Giuseppe; he aint as fast as Lager Beer."

Gigi sat; for a moment Giuseppe and Lager Beer plunged but the weight on the left rein brought them up at the jeweler's door. Lucia came up, gasping.

"Lucia, you sit down beside of Gigi," Giulia commanded, and then she waved her little brown hand toward the open door of the shop. "Signore," she said suavely, "we desire to sell this *porcellino* for a coral finger."

The proprietor of the shop looked out. So did his customer, a fair-haired woman dressed in mourning. Lucia, still sitting on the reins, looked up.

"Has the signora already a coral finger?" she asked sadly.

"What does the child mean?" The jeweler was puzzled.

But the fair-haired woman came out to the curb.

"A coral finger?" she asked gently. "Have you a coral finger to sell?"

"No, signora," replied Giulia, "we have instead a pig, *un piccolo porcellino*. Lucia's Mamma sold their coral finger, and because of id the *bambina*, Pepinella, is about to die. We desire to give this *porcellino* for a coral finger to save the *bambina*."

"What can the child really mean?" The fair-haired signora appealed to the jeweler. He shook his head.

Lucia rose; tears were running down her pale little cheeks. "Pepinella, our *bambina*, is dying," she explained, "because thad our coral finger waz sold to the rich signora ad the Settlement House."

The signora put her hand on the little girl's thin shoulder. "Is it true that there's a baby dying at your house?" she asked quickly.

"It is true, signora," replied Giulia, "and a coral finger, it would cure her, so Signora Mazzarella says. This *porcellino*—" Giulia, the fluent, stopped with her mouth open: she had suddenly seen Grandpa Pape Popolizio's fat figure appearing in the crowd.

"Giulia, Gigi!" he shouted. "What you do?"

The startled Giulia let go her hold on the *porcellino*; there was a squeal, a plunge, and a fat little pig darted down Grand Avenue. Behind him went Pape, panting and screaming.

"Arresta my *porcellino*!" he shouted; "stop him! Gigi, Giulia, you rascals!"

But Giulia, with Lucia's hand in hers, was explaining to the fair-haired signora. To their amazement she invited the two little Italian girls into a waiting motor-car.

"Come and show me the way," she said sweetly. "I help sometimes to send little children into the country. May I come to see your Pepinella?"

Lucia trembled. "Eef my Mamina so desire—" she faltered.

But Giulia was shocked at her want of manners. "When you arrive above, signora, the Signora Mazzarella will embrace you with grad joy, same as would my Grandpa Pape Popolizio."

The signora laughed. "I think I'll not call to-day on Grandpa Pape Popolizio," she said.

It was then that Giulia remembered Gigi, but Gigi was not there. In the distance she saw him sitting up in the goat cart, driving wildly up Grand Avenue in the opposite direction from that taken by the pig, Grandpa Pape and the crowd. Gigi had learnt that prudence is the better part of valor. As he disappeared in a cloud of dust, the big motor-car took the turn to the little shanty tenement by the railroad crossing, and the fair-haired signora, Giulia and Lucia all climbed up the squeaking stairs to the dark, hot loft.

"Mamina," said Lucia softly, "thees signora would lika to know about the coral finger."

Anna looked up, startled, covering the child with her outstretched arms. "*Dio la benedica!*" she cried softly, uttering the petition against the Evil Eye.

The signora knelt beside the baby, while the garlic scented air of the attic seemed to thicken around her. Pepinella lay asleep, a blue ring around her little mouth.

"I'm so sorry," said the visitor, pityingly, "so sorry for you, and

I want to help you. Will you let me?"

"I do nod wanta her ad the hospital," sobbed Anna. "I wanta be with her alla time, signora. I thang you, bud—"

"But you will be with her," said the signora, eagerly. "Haven't you heard of the Fresh Air Fund? Of the mothers and babies we send into the country? A week in the country home and this dear baby would come around; she's smothering in this heat."

The signora tried again. "You'll come with me?" she said winningly, to Anna. "You and this little girl and the baby—you need not be separated. I'll see that you all have three weeks out in the green, beautiful country."

Anna clasped Pepinella in her arms again, her dark, sad eyes questioning, Lucia clinging to her skirt. Anna doubted; after all, these *forestieri*—one never knew—

The fair-haired signora laid a soft hand on her arm. "You'll come, wont you, if I promise to buy another coral finger for this dear baby?"

Anna burst into tears. "*Si, signora*, to the end of the world; thad will save my Pepinella."

The signora turned to Giulia, whose face was wreathed in smiles. "And you, little one?" she asked, "you'll come, too?"

Giulia courtesied prettily. "Egscuse," she said politely, "bud me, I mus' go and help Grandpa Pape Popolizio to catch thad pig."

FINIS



# A Sister of Shalott

by HARRIS  
MERTON  
LYON

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ILLUSTRATED BY  
LUCILE PATTERSON

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AUTHOR OF "LATE  
SPRING," "SARDONICS."

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The mirror cracked from side to side:

"The curse is come upon me," cried  
The Lady of Shalott.

**S**HE may have been named Clara because of her eyes, which were clear and steady. They were startling with their youngness, for they looked out from an old and tired face. Each weary hour of the day and night had drawn its wrinkled line about her mouth, about her eyes, across her forehead. And she was only thirty-two. She looked ten years older.

In that soft New England spring, up among those beautiful hills with their vistas into green dreamlands, it seemed remarkable that there should be hundreds and hundreds of such farm drudges as Clara; wrinkled young women with either bitter or leaden hearts; going from task to task with half-bowed heads; suffering in body from fugitive or chronic ailments; suffering in mind from the solitude, from the inability to think outside a certain dull round of thoughts.

The city women, motoring up through those sweet-scented roads, would stop

and cry out delightedly: "Oh, look at that dear little place!" and Clara would reflect to herself that it was indeed dear—it had cost her every dream she once had had. They went on their way, rolling over other hills into fresh surprises. Clara went on hers, to boil out the milk-pans, churn, and scrub before getting dinner for John and the "hand."

She had been married for fifteen years. Her first two children had died. She now had a little boy five years old, a nag, a tease, a torment to whatever good nature was left her. Yet, of course, she loved him; and she loved her husband. But the boy would grow up and go away—and then what? The long stretch of painful, dull years ahead of her would be even worse than those she had already gone through. Her husband subscribed for a rural weekly paper and in this paper there was a department "devoted to women." The person who edited this department was very fond of poetry and felt that quotations of verse were an aid in brightening the lives of farm women. Clara had read this doggerel, of course. And one line out of it all kept dinning in her ears:



The city women, motoring up through those sweet-scented roads, would stop and cry out delightedly: "Oh, look at that dear little place!" and Clara would reflect to herself that it was indeed dear—it had cost her every dream she once had had.



Life is really what you make it.

She thought back sixteen years to the time when, as Clara Hendricks, she had been the beauty of the town. It was all a confused jumble now, of moonlight rides, dances, kissing games, singing old songs. Life is really what you make it! Before her father died he had wanted to see her "happy." She had wanted to go to the big city, learn to be a nurse, see the world, maybe even get on a ship and make a trip somewhere. She had always longed for that magnificent experience. When the boys, in the moonlight, used to sing "Good Night, Ladies" to her and reached the words:

Merrily we bowl along, o'er the  
deep blue sea,

it used to send a thrill through her. Some day she would go on a ship, maybe clear across the ocean.

"That is romantic nonsense," said her father. "You mustn't think of going to the city alone. It would be safer and better to marry right at home and settle down."

He grew worse, bed-ridden, pleaded with her. So she gave it all up to please him and she married John Cramm, mostly because her father wanted her to. A good husband; a good match. Eight years later she had two weeks free from the farm, absolutely free to do as she liked. She visited an old aunt in New York. Saw the crowds and the theatres; had a miraculous time. When she came home she found the place a mess. So she got up an hour earlier every morning—at four o'clock instead of at five—and worked until after dark until she had got the place back to its former neatness. That was the only vacation she had had in fifteen years.

It was one of her duties every Friday morning to drive to town, nine miles away, with a week's supply of butter, eggs, chickens and, in season, fresh vegetables for certain customers who depended upon her for these things. The chicken-money and egg-money were hers. It amounted to two hundred dollars a year.

This particular Friday there was to

be a Y. M. C. A. "social" in town—an affair at which cakes and ice cream and lemonade were sold, the proceeds to be used toward erecting a new building. By a circular, she had been invited to attend, as was everybody in the country for miles around. Most of the women would not go because they begrudged the spending of the thirty or forty cents for such fripperies; but Clara had learned from that curiously idle but pointed gossip of the countryside that a number of women further down the road really were going to be there. In quite a little fever of re-awakened femininity she resolved to go.

So, having made sure that all her stock of produce was safely stowed away in the buggy, having harnessed and hitched up the horse and tied him to a post, she dashed back into the house to do a curious thing.

A very curious thing.

Upstairs she ran, into her own room—stood before the looking-glass of her bureau, jerked open a drawer with hurried fingers, searched for a round china box, very small, hastily took off its top, dabbed a handkerchief into it and began to rub her cheeks briskly. Clara thought it was rouge. It had been left there several years before by a young woman, a summer boarder from the city. But actually the stuff was a rose madder paste for the finger nails. The effect was grotesque—and, as with so much that is grotesque in life, underneath the grotesqueness there ran a piteous irony.

Clara, oblivious of the rest of herself; of the dull costume that was to go with this display; of the sorry horse and the old buggy; of her coarse, thick shoes and old-fashioned hat, gave all her attention to her hard little cheeks, cheeks through which the bones were already beginning to reveal the *memento mori* of the skull, cheeks which had been neglected for too many years—all this to be conquered now, wiped out, banished by a few minutes rubbing with a magic paste. She had got the notion on that New York trip of long ago. She looked in the glass and was pleased with herself. Why? Was it lack of taste? Perhaps. Perhaps, too, the hope that hun-



gers overlong is not too particular when it comes to be assuaged.

With her rough hands she clumsily powdered her wrinkled brown skin; powdered her brow and her nose and her chin and her neck. The effect was ghastly. She dressed her thin hair differently, fluffing it up above her forehead where usually she parted it flat. While she had been in New York she had bought some cheap puffs. She had been ashamed of her own dull hair; had wanted to imitate the young city girls—but had never dared. Now, however, she even stuck on these tawdry things, obviously of a different color from the rest of her hair. She put on a little lace collar and fastened it with a vulgar glass brooch—a horse's head in imitation silver, embalmed forever in a vitreous lump the size of a pullet's egg. She drew on some white cotton gloves, slipped out of the house and started. John had not seen her.

Fortunately, the wind and sun, during the long nine-mile drive, did much to soften the horrible gaudiness of her face. She perspired partly from the heat of the sun, partly from the heat of her own heart; and as she perspired she wiped her face again and again. More than half the stuff came off onto her handkerchiefs. The nag, a huge, elephant-footed, broken-down work horse, plodded slowly along, taking his time.

Her thoughts were whirling. Never in her life had Clara dared do such a thing, and the blood pounded in her veins with the pleasure of her own boldness. The very air around her seemed full of glee with her at her adventure. She drove through country roads of greening birches and alders, past orchards of apple bloom singing under the persuasive sun—or so it seemed to her, for the trees were full of bees. Whenever she felt she might repent of her rashness, a cat-bird near by would break out and thrash the air happily or a bluejay whistle from a hillside: it sounded like hurrahing. Above all, like unaccustomed wine, the sense of pleasure, the glowing sense of pleasure flowed through her. She had not felt such harmony with the spring since her girlhood. Spring usual-

ly meant to her only house-cleaning and garden planting.

Other women, with brisker horses, passed her going toward town. She nodded to them and smiled. To herself she thought: Aren't they old and grimy and sour-looking? Why, even the animals, the cows in the fields, look fresher and prettier!

But each grim drudge as she passed saw with an inward shock the appearance Clara made and jogged on to carry the scandal into the village: to the butcher shops, fish shops, grocery stores where they traded, to the homes wherein they sold their produce, to the other women who would be at the "social."

The town was made of a gaping, idle, sidewalk-shuffling lot of people who scratched their heads a good deal over everybody else's affairs and just barely managed to negotiate their own. Their minds were the usual mean provincial minds, their traits hypocritical and sly. Not having much news to talk over made them all inveterate gossipers. Where much is happening little is said. And the reverse is true. Men-tattlers were as bad as the women-tattlers. They tattled in the saloons, in the railroad-station, in the barber-shops, on the street corners; they even left their stores to go into other men's stores and pass on a bit of scandal. So many of them had grudges against so many others of them that the tangle of petty spites could not possibly be unraveled. Although each of them cheated and lied as much as he dared, it galled him to have anyone do the same to him. They had no use for the Golden Rule, any way you take it.

When Clara came down the dusty main street the idle shopkeepers and loungers were already prepared to gape at her. Curiously enough, the attention really pleased her. And curiously, too, she really did look quite pretty. Her eyes shone brightly and she carried herself as if she were young again.

She made her rounds and then tied up the horse at a feed-rack. After she had given him his oats, she went to the "social."

Farm women and town women mingled in a motley crowd. The most out-

landish styles of garments, some of them so old they were almost the fashion again, startled the beholder. Hats of every shape, size and color—from rusty black bonnets, which looked as if they were made of vulcanized rubber, on up to the latest wide-rimmed straws with great streamers of red ribbon—nodded

to Clara, either to engage her in conversation or to observe her face to face.

Because she had her cheeks painted!

And the report of that spread and spread—not to the whole town, but to that part of the town which knew her.

That, however, was to Clara the whole town. The whole world to each of us is but that portion of the world which we happen to touch.



"That dirty Ross Fister kissed me—the horse—ran away—" She began sobbing and sat down on the step.

and bobbed and fell askew to the right, or askew to the left, or at times straight backward off of ancient scalps unused to much adornment. A carnival could not have produced a harsher clash of colors. As far as Clara's costume was concerned, she was really no worse than plenty of the others. Yet every woman there made it a point to step up close

She did not know at that time of this havoc of her reputation. For one long day she enjoyed immensely the rather tedious amusements of the place. Finally at four o'clock, later than she should have been, she started for home.

Up through the cooling hills the old horse plodded, slowly dragging the tired but happy woman. Clara leaned back and

indulged in a quiet retrospective dream. The old days sent up mirage after mirage before her. When she passed the schoolhouse, now fallen into disuse, she remembered how Ed Finlan and Ross Fister used to steal sheep's nose apples from Talbot's hill and bring them to her, bashful beau fashion. When she passed the millpond she remembered the skating—how pretty she used to look in her furs; how, that time she sprained her ankle, Ross Fister had carried her almost a quarter of a mile to the sleigh. She passed a load of hay going to town and it recalled to her the hay-rides in the soft moonlit nights of her girlhood and the sweet voices singing "My Old Kentucky Home." She half-closed her eyes and hummed....

About an eighth of a mile from the cross-roads store, and about two miles from her home, she saw a man leisurely strolling along. It was Ross Fister. Ross had turned out to be a no-account idler, one of those creatures so common to the countryside: strong, able to do a long, hard day's work; good-natured, bright, cheerful; but lazy, given to drinking too much hard cider; working two or three days, then laying off; living in a tumble-down shack back on an unused log-road; cooking his own meals; simply wandering through life, sufficient unto each day.

He looked back, saw her coming, recognized her by that horse—a notorious local fossil—and bent down to pluck some marsh marigold by the roadside.

When she came up, he grinned and said:

"Hello, Clara. Give me a lift."

She stopped and, just as he clambered in, she regretted her action. She saw that he had been drinking more than usual. But it was too late. She clucked to the horse and they started ahead.

"How far are you going?" she asked.

"Just to the store."

She felt relieved.

Silence.

"I p-picked you a bokay, Clara." He handed her the little yellow flowers.

"Thanks, Ross." She took them with her disengaged hand and thrust them into her belt.

"Just like old times, Clara. J-just like—like old times."

Silence.

He turned to stare straight at her. "My! But you do look pretty to-day, Clara." He leaned closer. "My! But you *do* look pretty."

She bit her lip and gazed straight ahead, inwardly cursing her folly for letting him into the buggy.

"You look so pretty that I'd—I'd like to kiss you." He grabbed her fiercely, all the good humor gone. "And I *will* kiss you."

"Ross!" she screamed.

But he kissed her full on the lips.

"You dirty—you—"

The struggle in the buggy was determined, abrupt. She dropped the reins and dealt him a blow in the face with her fist. Small as she was, Clara was strong. She twisted, writhed, got her elbow under his chin. With a quick tug, she threw him—threw him half out of the seat, his body across the wheel.

Then an amazing thing happened. The fossil horse came to life. Frightened out of its wits, it plunged forward at a gallop, throwing the man into the middle of the dusty road; and the faster its speed, the faster its fright drove it. The reins were whirling along over its back, under its hoofs. Clara, under ordinary circumstances, would have regained control of the animal. But the suddenness and the shock, the rocking buggy and the terror-stricken flight, were all too much for her. She clung to the dashboard, on her knees, and screamed at the top of her voice.

Rounding a bend, the runaway approached the cross-roads store. Half a dozen men were out in the road. Women and children on the step gazed with enormous eyes.

At sight of the men, the old nag abruptly stopped. Clara was pitched out, helped up.

Voices raised a clamor of questioning. And before she thought, in fury and in fear she burst out:

"That dirty Ross Fister kissed me—the horse—ran away—" She began sobbing and sat down on the step, dusty, bruised, her hat awry, two false puffs

dangling loose, the ghastly paint-on her cheeks showing cruelly clear.

The men and women looked at each other. Calculation crept around in tiny lines over their eyelids. One old woman—a notorious scandal-monger—pursed up her wry lips and said: “Um-hm.”

Clara sat still, arranging her dress and hat as best she could. The crowd was silent. Finally, she dabbed her eyes with one of her tell-tale handkerchiefs and said, as calmly as she could:

“I must get home. Will some one please hold the horse—and—help me in? I—I think I’ve sprained my ankle.”

As she drove slowly away, she heard a nasty female voice which had presumed she was beyond earshot. It said: “Served her right—the painted Jezebel.”

The last mile and a half was a lurid journey. She knew that in all her world there was not one single voice of sympathy, of understanding. She knew that before the eyes of her world she stood robbed of that one false yet priceless asset—her “character.”

No matter how good a woman she was under her skin, the public aspect of her character was bad. And her public was her life. There was no appeal for her beyond the little circle that she knew. And in that little circle there was not a one who would not condemn her actions throughout all that silly, tragic day. The nasty thought which comes at least once to all of us who have been wronged in men’s eyes—the thought that life is actually not worth living—kept recurring again and again in Clara’s brain.

And see how it all had happened! she thought. Though no fault of her own. Absolutely through no fault of her own. She had fixed herself up simply out of a childish, and a womanly, desire to look pretty once more. Silly it may have been, but nothing criminal in it. She had picked up Fister out of the most ordinary motives of kindness—of custom, even. Men and women were always giving one another a lift along that road. How could she know what the dirty cur was going to do?

Thus her thoughts marched. When she was not cold with fear at her being

dropped by everybody, she was burning with rage at the stupidity of it all—of the people, of their attitude, of the way in which her loss of “character” came about. And now, in addition, she had to meet her husband.

He was waiting for her at the gate, because of the lateness of the hour. Six o’clock; and the milk to be separated and the cream stowed away.

“What kept ye so late?” he boomed at her morosely.

She refused to answer; threw him the reins; clambered down stiffly and limped into the house. At the kitchen door she saw her little boy and the sight broke down her resolve to be matter-of-fact. She lost control of herself, tottered into a chair and began crying with long, low wails. She gouged into her streaming eyes with that absurd handkerchief.

While he was putting up the horse her husband knew that something had gone wrong.

He came in brusquely. “*What* in the nation’s the matter?” he snarled.

Like so many so-called good men in this world, John Cramm was merely a solemn stick; a bigot in his family, an ineffectual specimen in the outside world of men. He was tall, dark, rather weak, with a bent toward melancholy, apt to whimper when he could not gain his point any other way. He was strong on what he called “duty,” and he considered that he was thoroughly doing his duty by life when he put in a long, plodding day on his farm. He sometimes cultivated his corn an extra time or two so as to give more than his full measure of duty.

He was of that worst type of disciplinarian: the disciplinarian with a slack jaw. He was religious with a religion that came from accustomed Sunday worship, not from closet thinking or the faith that is born in the solitude of the heart. He loved his wife; he loved his child. That is, he *had* loved them. But this feeling had gradually taken rank along with the other strict and sensible feelings which he held. He loved orderliness on his farm, money in the bank, daily progress; he loved his decent position in the eyes of his world. So, natural-



ly, he loved his wife—in those terms. So many of the “good matches” which girls make are matches which belong to this sort. So many of the “good men” who are married are men of this sort.

Clara bent over, put her eyes down against her sleeve, and kept up the pitiful, long-drawn wailing.

“Well—what’s up?” demanded her husband, belligerently.

“Oh—oh—oh—” she sobbed. “I wish I was dead! I wish I was dead!” She drew out the last word with a sort of subdued shriek.

“What the mis—”

“I didn’t mean anything by it! I didn’t! I didn’t!” She raised her sodden, bloated face to him, her lips trembling with sorrow. “I didn’t mean *anything* by it, John! I don’t know how it all happened. I—I’m a good woman, John, and you know it; a good woman, and a good wife and a good mother—”

He was staring as if hypnotized, with his black, hollow eyes fixed on the handkerchief. “Good Heavens, Clara! What’s *that*? It aint blood?”

“P-paint. It’s face paint. And Ross Fister kissed me. And they’re all talking about it; and Jim ran away with me—I—Oh, my God! I wish I was dead.”

Her husband’s slack jaw dropped. He gazed at her stupidly, moistened his underlip with his tongue, tried to speak, swallowed with difficulty a lump in his throat, moistened his tongue again; and then, with a characteristic gesture, he put his hands up into his hair and clutched his temples. Finally he said:

“Ross Fister and you—you painted your cheeks and went driving with him—didn’t you go to town?—You?—My wife?—mother of my boy?—”

His goodness and his training were responsible for this calculation of what had happened.

“No!” she shouted. “No! And you know it.” Then in gasps of breath she told him exactly what had happened. He remained standing, staring at her with melancholy eyes, one hand still clasped in an imbecile fashion in his hair. She remained sitting, pounding the table near her with her tightly clenched fist as she emphasized each point.

“Oh, this is awful,” he said, once. And again, “Oh, this is awful.”

When she had done he began monotonously in a mourning tone: “Oh, what’ll people say about this! Oh, what’ll people say!” After a bit he changed: “We’ll never live this down—never—never—never! We’ll never live this down!” Then: “How could you do it, Clara? How *could* you do it?” Then oracularly: “I knew that some day something would happen. I knew it! I just knew it”

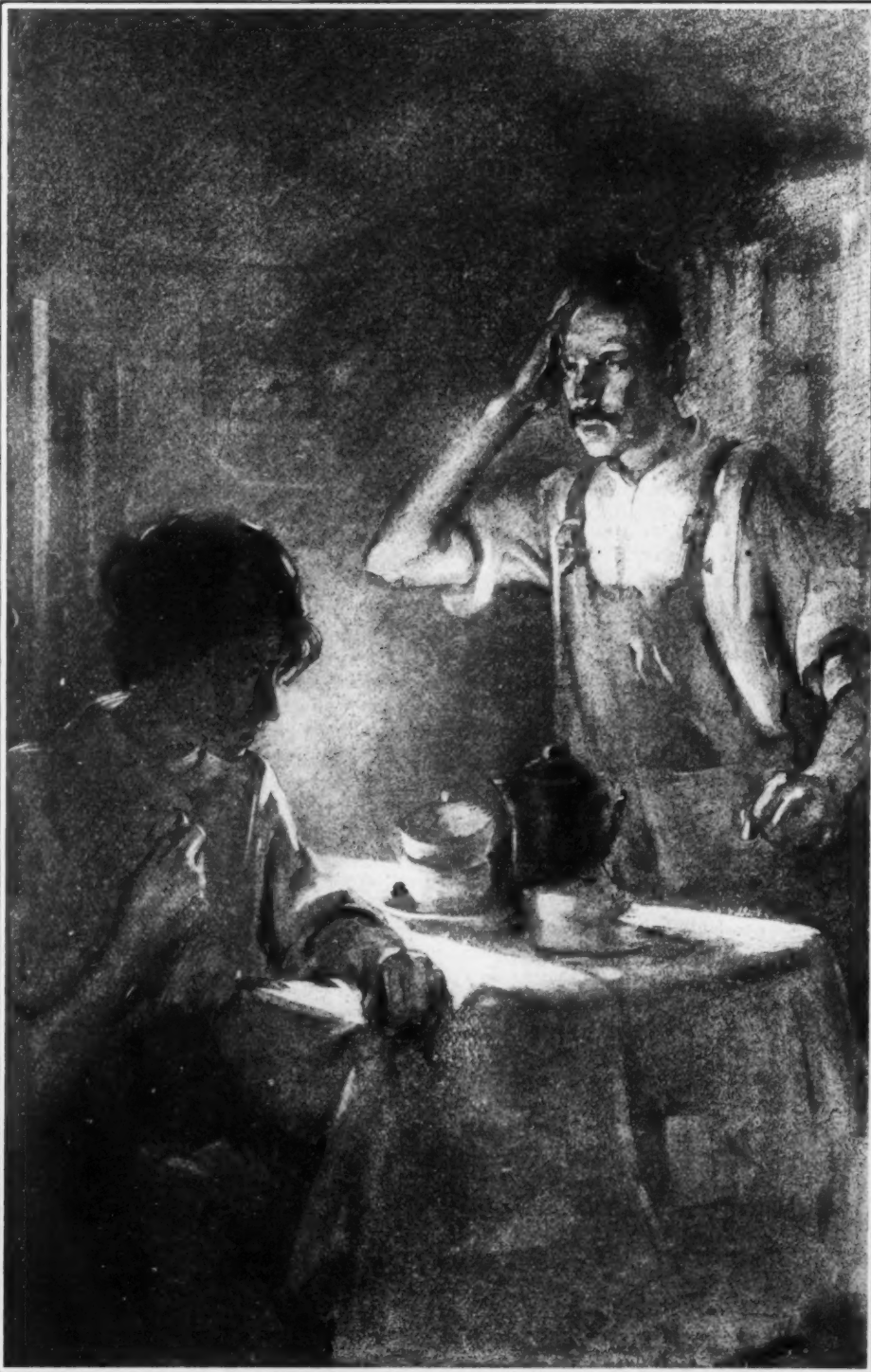
His mind was wandering in around through the maze of the calamity. As yet it had found nothing to focus on and he was indulging merely in abstract explosions of woe. The thought never occurred to either of them—or to anyone else, in fact—that he would hunt up Fister and thrash him. Anybody who knew the two men would have laughed at the idea.

She kept up her sobbing: “Oh....oh....oh....I wish I was dead....I wish I was dead....”

“*You*,” he hissed suddenly. “You silly, brainless fool—you! An old woman like *you*—daubing her cheeks up—getting into a mess like this—ruining my life—making me the laugh of my friends, of everybody I know—My God! You useless, utterly worthless—yah! I don’t know how to begin on *you*. I ought to leave you—make you leave me—get a divorce from you—oh, my God! and Robbie—a little boy having to grow up through all this—hearing it from the other boys—oh, my God, I don’t know what to do—I don’t know what to do! Think of me; think of my life. You’ve ruined me. Nothing could hurt me—hurt my standing—the way this will!”

She burst out like a mad woman: “I didn’t mean any harm by what I did! What made me old—what made me an ‘old woman,’ as you call me? You and your miserable farm, and working myself until I dropped. I go all day long without having a soul to speak to, day in and day out. You come to your meals, mumble a little and go back to the fields again. I wish my mother was alive! Oh, mother, mother, I wish you were alive





He was staring as if hypnotized. "Good heavens, Clara! What's *that*? It aint blood?"  
"Paint," she answered "It's face paint. And Ross Fister kissed me."

to-night!—I'd leave you soon enough! *We'd* leave you—Robbie and I! I'm sick and tired of this farm and the town and the people. Oh, I'll go crazy up here! I know I'll go crazy up here!"

They glared at each other—he viciously morose, the martinet of his fireside, she beside herself with anguish, the lonely woman whom the world misjudged. During these later years they had got along without much conversation. They were used to silences, to appraising events without talking about them.

And as she faced him she kept thinking—even in the midst of her sorrow—bitterly to herself: "Well, I pleased my father. I married him and pleased my father. I am here. I didn't go to New York. And this is the end of all my attempts to please everybody."

"A fine mess you've made of things," he sneered. He stood looking at the toes of his boots. Now and then he shook his head, darkly, miserably. Finally he said, biting off each word slowly:

"You'd better get that cream separated. The cows have been milked over an hour."

She went stumbling, obedient, out into the kitchen, the foolish handkerchief still pressed against her mouth.

"Oh, I'll go crazy up here," she sobbed. "I know I'll go crazy."

Thereafter, as she drove to town, with bowed head, looking neither to right nor left, people said: "She's turned queer, aint she?"

And other people answered, laughing harshly: "Well, yes. She had her fling once. Reckon it'll last her all her life."

### THE BUSY THOUGHTS OF A MAN ON A TRAIN

**K**EEPING in mind some of the recent disclosures in regard to the methods of operation in vogue in Wall Street, what chance do you figure an ordinary, garden-variety sneak thief would have among the money barons there?

Think of the basis for a story his adventures would make! Evidently those were the thoughts running through Richard Washburn Child's mind while he was riding on a train down South not so very long ago. The result was one of the most amusing tales that has ever come from the pen—rather, it was a pencil, this time; and the writing desk a book bought from the news "butcher" and laid across the writer's knee—of the creator of the delightful "Jim Hands," "Paymaster" and of many another fine fiction character. Mr. Child wired to us when he'd finished the story that he liked it better than anything he'd ever written. We wired back, after we read it, that we agreed. The title is, "**A Plunge in Big Business**" and the story by itself is worth the price of any magazine. But in addition to it, you'll find fifteen other stories by the best known and best liked writers in the country in the **DECEMBER RED BOOK MAGAZINE**. Such writers as **Wallace Irwin, Harris Merton Lyon, Crittenden Marriott, Frederick R. Bechdolt, Edward Lyell Fox**, (yes, it's a football story; and a corker, too) **Owen Oliver and Charles Neville Buck**.

The sort of stories and the sort of writers that give the **RED BOOK** the title of

**THE BEST FICTION MAGAZINE IN THE WORLD**

# The Winking Dimple

by

CAMPBELL  
MACCULLOCH

A Tale of  
Old Phoenix

ILLUSTRATED BY



DAN SAYRE GROESBECK

**T**HE orchestra that infested Billy Parmalee's summer garden was relieving itself of many adverse opinions concerning the weather, the advisability of third terms, and whether Beethoven's deafness really affected his construction of the *Sonata Pathétique*. On the generously frescoed wall near the door was a bit of impressionistic artistry that seemed offensively fresh and annoyingly chaotic. Closer scrutiny hinted at haste and a whitewash brush, while charity counseled incompetence and great grief. I hailed Francis, a Milesian man of much erudition and a taste for the classics. He came and permitted the odor of boiled onions to permeate the atmosphere. I pointed out the offense against art.

"I can't make out whether that thin column at the right is intended for a radiograph of the statue of Liberty, or a front elevation of the Pullman Building," I complained, and Francis put his head to one side gravely to consider the point.

"Who perpetrated it?" I demanded. "Was it one of the younger set of the Art Student's League, or a new Aubrey Beardsley striving to create a revolt?"

Francis shook his head slowly and wiped the top of the table with care.

"'Twas neither," he replied. "But thereby hangs a matter of principle, a little bit of love, a question in zoölogy,

a trifle of acrobatics and the same old trouble that has deviled humanity since Cain grabbed a night-stick and reduced the census twenty-five per cent." He cocked his head on one side and sighed. "You'd hardly think it to look at me, but I've traveled among the circus tents of the country with a tribe of seven gymnastic marvels, and answered to the name of Alexander Roseno every time the paymaster slammed open the window of his wagon."

I looked at him curiously.

"A tale?" I queried.

"The same," he responded, casting an eye to where the proprietor was adding up the minus column on the cash register, "and this is the manner of it. By the way, perhaps you'd keep an eye on the door back of the orchestra stand. I'm expecting company, and I don't want it to catch me unprepared."

He hoisted one foot upon the rung of the chair opposite, draped his towel gracefully over his bent arm, and breathed deeply.

"Being a large chunk of a lad, I was thus by temperament barred from such gentle mental excitements as pin-wheels, handsprings, flip-flaps and the like, and yet, with a desire for personal knowledge of strains and stresses as evidenced by the human frame, it was not strange that in the end I became 'understander' for the 'Rosenos,' a tribe of seven large

men who stood upon my bare shoulders and took liberties with the pet wart I was nourishing on the rear elevation of my neck. I am willing to make affidavit that the man who can stand that treatment twice a day for six months could have Job complained of as a rowdy character. I stuck for seven."

Francis sighed reminiscently.

"At the end of that period I could see that the welfare of the only scion of the house of Clancy demanded that he should have less rough-house and more emolument. So it was that when the greatest aggregation of facts and fakes descended upon the town of Phoenix for one matinée and one night performance, I re-

moved myself from the family payroll and being stepped upon. I had a hundred and sixty-three dollars and a strong desire to lie in a bed that could be depended upon to stay more than two nights in one place. When the other Rosenos had fitted themselves into the pigeonholes of the bunk car, yours affectionately was absent by invitation.

"Here's where I start life anew, and begin to safeguard my wart and feelings with all the enthusiasm that's in me," I whispered to myself the next morning in



"It's your fault," says she. "But for you insultin' me with the money it would never have happened."

the hotel, after I had managed to claw my way out from between the blankets. 'Never will I look another circus in the face without sticking out my tongue, and the man that pastes up a picture of anyone in tights before my window will have a fight on his hands.' And then I romped into the dining room of the hotel, tripping over a large black cat with a queer kink in its tail that looked as if some one had slammed a door on it. 'Tis such small things that steer a man here and yon. Suppose no one had ever



slammed a door upon the beast's tail, and—but, as Rudyard Kipling says, let us not crowd the regular customer away from the free lunch.

"In such circumstances, did you ever look up expecting to be offended by the sight of a large colored man perspiring with the freedom of a leaky faucet, and find yourself gazing at something in pink and white and forty dollars worth of gold hair? By the color of your ears I see the same has happened. As for me, I blinked twice, and then pinched myself on the inside of the leg where it is tender.

" 'Will it be roast beef, boiled mutton, steak, curry of lamb, eggs or—' she began, and believe me or not, as suits you best, at that minute I could think of nothing in the world but a stream of one dollar gold pieces trickling down into a big silver basin while a phonograph played 'Home Sweet Home.' She had a blue sash.

" 'I will,' says I, when I could catch my breath. Tell me, did you ever see a little dimple on anyone's chin that winked at you? One that sort of wiggled around and hypnotized your better nature?

" 'Which?' says she, opening a pair of blue eyes that looked better than the open doors into the sub-treasury.

" 'All of it,' I told her with my heart doing a Lancashire clog inside of me.

" 'It's not allowed,' says she, turning pinker and perhaps a little scandalized. 'One, maybe, or perhaps two at a pinch, but the house sets a limit.'

" 'A fresh drummer at the next table laughed. I stared at him until he remembered his manners, and then I fished a silver dollar out of my pocket and laid it on the edge of the table.

" 'I hear rumors of a show at the opera house,' says I, not looking up.

" 'You'll hear reports of something falling against your ear,' says she, swift as steel, and slammed the dollar with a whang into the corner where the cat I'd almost stepped on was conducting ablutionary processes. From the howl you'd have said there was a mouse loose in a seminary.

" 'Take shame to yourself,' says I to

her with a show of indignation. 'The idee of tryin' to assassinate a poor feline creature with a hunk of money!'

" 'She grabbed the yowling animal up in her arms, and I could feel her eyes drill a couple of holes straight through my chest.

" 'It was your fault!' says she, mournful like. 'I raised Tommy here from a kitten, and he knows I'd not hurt him. But for you insultin' me with the money it would never have happened.'

" 'I'll take your word for Tommy's good points, splendid disposition, objection to cash and how he come by the offset in his caudal appendage, but I mistrust me that we're forgettin' the exercises we mentioned a bit ago,' I says, and she smiled like a shot of the sun stabbin' through a black cloud.

" 'Are you celebratin' the conclusion of a little private Lent of your own, or have you made a bet that you can make the boss put up the shutters?' she asks, settin' the feline disturber of harmony down upon the floor.

" 'Ma'am,' I said to her, confidential, 'I have within some hours cut loose from the circus that defaced your city. A month ago, when the educated pig died—I mean the original one, and not any base imitation,' I put in, tossing a hard look at the drummer—'they made him into sausage and he appeared upon the menoo of the cook tent. I regarded it as a dangerous precedent, and when the boss canvas-man passed in his checks, it was three days before I could make my escape, during which period I failed to eat. Now I am a famished man.'

" 'I cast no bouquets at myself when I assure you that she returned in six minutes with seven kinds of meat and four vegetables. Women are invariably sympathetic to the man that presents a new side of the case. In the meantime, the cat was becomin' acquainted by the simple process of wipin' his nose on my trousers, after the fashion of such beasts. It's but a method of exhibitin' confidence and welcome into the family circle. Between bites I fed the cat and made up my mind that I'd not leave the town until, with the help of the gab I had and a priest I could get, I'd



made at least one change in the city directory.

"I pushed the cat away when I'd finished, and, filled with the excitement of it, went out to see if I could win enough to buy a small house with a green fence around it. What I needed was immediate action. I found it in a place where they sold red, blue and white ivory buttons, and spun a little wheel with numbers on it. It is an interesting demonstration of the influence of the higher brands of arithmetic, that, with thirty-five to one against you, there are still foolish men who figure out a way to have the best of it. Fifteen minutes later, when I went out to make the usual loser's arrangement with the bartender, he looked at me kindly, which is contrary to custom.

"'You're not stayin' long,' says he.

"'I lack the incentive to remain,' says I. 'The handsome croupier within removed it from me painlessly and without much struggle. However, I will not kick; to work I am inclined. Do you know of a job that remains unattached? There is no pride in me.'

"The bar man laughed and looked over at a long, thin party of medium attainments and a fish eye who seemed to be regrettin' something.

"'Here's your huckleberry, Jerry,' says he, and the party addressed smiled as genial as if some one had touched him on the back of the neck with an icicle. Then and there I laid a little bet with myself that he wouldn't laugh at a fat waiter falling down a flight of steps with a three course dinner on a tray.

"'It's a fine day,' says he.

"'Not for me,' says I.

"'You're broke,' he observes, battin' his cold eye.

"'Some one has blabbed,' I come back at him.

"'They did,' he says. 'I heard you curse when the little ball dropped into the seventeen and you had just flipped the last white chip onto the eight. 'Tis thus a man betrays himself.'

"'I have no words,' I told him without heat or resentment. 'Evidence wins from modesty by the length of a sheet of legal cap. I've harkened to the winds

of chance for the last time. There's but one bright spot in the horizon of woe and mis-spent patrimony, and I don't know her name, but she wears a blue apron and a smile that makes me think of where I saw an installment furniture house two blocks below. Have you a job in your pocket that'll fit a man with a seventeen-inch neck?'

"He laughed with the fearful freedom of a married man at a burlesque entertainment.

"'I have an eleemosynary occupation vacant that requires some slight knowledge of the mechanism of a broom handle and the adjectives of the English language,' says he. 'Would you care to look into it?'

"'Show me the floor that requires manicuring,' says I, 'and as we go along perhaps you'd point out some place where they rent small residences with all modern inconveniences, such as hot and cold gas, and runnin' ice. Also, what name shall I send your weddin' invitation in?'

"He stopped and stared at me in the eyes for a minute, and then grinned.

"'You have an elegant nerve,' he says with what I mistook for admiration. 'Bogardus is the name, though I have a friend or two that insist I don't look it.'

"He took me down seven blocks and turned off two more to the right; then crossed the street to a double store that had a muslin banner over the door. While I was trying to put a kink in my neck decipherin' the strange things on the banner, he unlocked the door.

"'Step within,' says he, leading the way into an atmosphere of China ducks and pine sawdust. I stepped across the threshold sniffin', and he started a music box to playin' 'My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean.' Ever since that time, whenever I hear a music box, I smell the sawdust and the ducks.

"There was nothing in the place but a red curtain half-way across, a ticket cage near the front door, and a wire rabbit-hutch down near the back. Those, with the one-tune music box, comprised the elegant and sumptuous fittings.

"'Step close and observe the marvel of the century,' says Mr. Bogardus, wav-

ing his hand at the cage where I could see something gray and slithy. 'Brainy men from colleges and foolish men from other and more important walks of life have cast an eye upon this faunal miracle, but not one has ever tapped it with his finger and cried *tag!*' Guess all you like, and then some more. What is it, and when, and why. Improvin' and mystifyin' as well as instructive, and all

"Inside was the queerest thing I'd seen in many a day. It was a slate-gray animal with bumpy eyes and a sort of slippery-elm look. At the corners was small legs endin' in soft feet with a ring of fur and a bunch of claws. There was a wide mouth like on a Mississippi cat-fish, and on the opposite end was a pen-holder that evidently was intended to represent a tail. It was as bald as a



"That afternoon I explained the nature of the beast four times and took in twenty-seven dollars."

for the insignificant sum of fifteen cents. Step inside, ladies and gents! There you are, Mr. Clancy, and you may get to work as soon as you like."

"I looked at the man to discover was he tryin' to string me, but his face was as serious as the leadin' character at a hangin'. Then I stepped close to the coop, and looked into it.

third-term senator, and asleep. I stepped back and peeled off my coat.

"Give it a name; tell me what wages I get, where the broom is, and do I put the key under the mat when I lock up for the night?" says I.

He nodded his head at me.

"I'll leave the name to you, but it's best to keep them guessing," he says.

'For the rest, you get a quarter out of every dollar that comes in. There's a bottle of milk and some chopped meat in the tin box by the corner there. Feed the source of income when you come down in the mornin', and before you leave at night.'

"'And the money?' says I.

"'I'm livin' in the same hotel where you kicked the cat this mornin',' says he. 'Shove my seventy-five per cent under the door of room 106 as you go by. Ta-ta.'

"Before I could ask him was the rent paid he had slammed the door and was gone, so I went back once more and looked at the beast. Then I moved to the other side and studied it. It was not a fish nor yet was it a bird. In fact I could easier enumerate a list of things it was not than I could give you a hint of what it was. Finally I lifted it out of the cage and it felt like a strange man's face had slipped in between your hands and was tryin' to escape. It squirmed and gave me the shivers; but I recalled that cash was needed to settle for the marriage license, so I swept the floor, opened up, and invited custom with the merry strains of the music box.

"That afternoon I explained the nature of the beast four times and took in twenty-seven dollars. Once as I stood outside the door coixin' the populace within, I saw the future tenant of the small house with the green fence I had in mind pass by on the other side of the street. Even now I remember

that my heart leaped up sideways, gave three loud thumps, clicked its heels together and went mad with excitement. She looked better outside in the sun than she did inside in the hotel. In some way I immediately had a framed picture of her hanging over the green gate looking up the street about six o'clock in the evening, and a man about my size galloping down the street towards her, fixed in my mind. When a man gets romances of that sort into his head the only way to save him is to either hang him or kidnap the girl."



"I never lie, myself, unless it's absolutely necessary," I told him.

Francis sighed deeply and mopped his forehead with the towel. Evidently his thoughts were pursuing the decorated channels of the years.

"Within a week I had snapped a rubber band about eighty-four dollars of my own and discovered that her name was Myrtle Banks. I'd got so I'd shiver delicious-like if she passed me. When I'd think of her I could see flowin' streams, and willow boughs dippin' softly down into the little ripples, as if to kiss them good mornin', and then I'd get goose-pimples up and down the spinal column. In between times I couldn't keep my eyes away from that dimple on her chin. It danced and courtesied until it would have fascinated a boa constrictor into a bunch of true lover's knots.

"Hush, now! Hush! I'd have to keep saying to myself, and pat myself on the shoulder until I could stand still without giving an imitation of a man with St. Vitus' dance.

"Bogardus did not come near the place but once, and then he couldn't talk, so I put him outside and locked the door, having a date to take Myrtle for a buggy ride."

Francis stopped again and shook his head sadly.

"Were you ever in love?" he asked me huskily, and went on before I could answer. "Man, man, but there's nothing like it! When the weather's fine, and the soft wind slips around the corner of a sighing clump of rustling trees and whispers that heaven has no edge on the strangle hold you've taken on pure delight! Whisper!" he went on, leaning down. "Did you ever take her out to the end of the car line where the river slides around a bend and chuckles over the little stones—if not, there's no hope for you." He turned away and smiled crookedly at the wrinkled wife of the proprietor, who'd just taken her place behind the desk.

I would like to bet anything within reason that I saw something bright in the corners of Francis' eyes at that minute. He rubbed the top of the table uselessly.

"This Myrtle bit of a thing used to

wear sleeves that came down to just above her elbows," he went on slowly, "and when you'd take her by the hand it was all to do to keep from ticklin' her on the soft forearm. Well, well; 'tis long, long ago. Would you think now to look at me that I'd ever been so witless as to take joy in things like that?

"I had but one complaint, and that was the cat. I'd got into the habit of buyin' gold fish for him, and keepin' one wrapped in a piece of paper in my pocket, and you'd be surprised at the affection he developed. Why, he'd sit up nights for me, and when I stepped on the porch, all the rest could take a back seat. He'd sit on my shoulder by the hour, and Myrtle put in many a minute wonderin' what caused the sympathy between us.

"I just can't understand what it is," she'd say. 'He'd never look at any man before.'

"There's a sympathetic understandin' between us," I'd tell her, for what was the use of lettin' her know that the cat would take a bribe. It's a serious matter to destroy the confidence reposed in dumb brutes.

"She'd got in the habit of coming down to the store to hark to me wrap words up in packages and deal them out to the ignorant proletariat that jammed the place at fifteen cents apiece. Always I'd possessed the gift of speech, and lately, since I'd taken to sleepin' with a dictionary under the pillow, words dripped from me like epithets from a presidential candidate. When she'd get tired of listening to the atrocities I performed upon the irregular verbs, she'd spend an hour in wonderin' what kind of a beast it was that J. Bogardus had discovered, and where he had discovered it.

"One day she was peering in over the top of the cage when she gave a little cry.

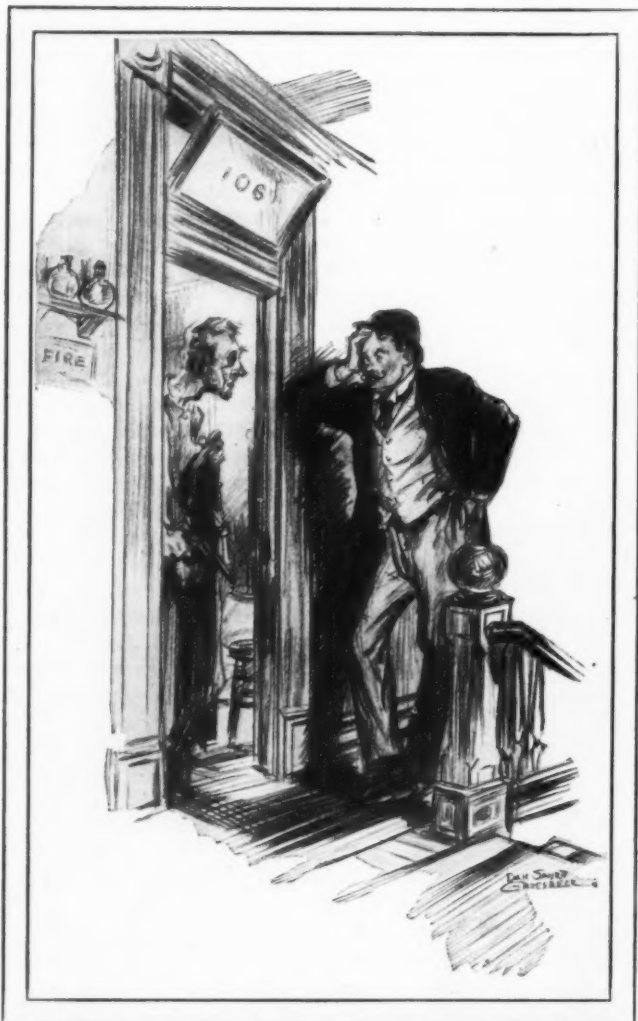
"Why, Francis!" says she, scared like, 'would you look at the cut on the top of its back! However—'

"Where?" says I.

"There!" says she. 'What did you do to the poor thing?'

"Not guilty!" says I, but puzzled inside, for the gash was a fresh one. 'Maybe it cut itself shavin'.'





"The marvel of the faunal universe is dead," I told him, feelin' it was better to get the worst over with.

"She looked at me queerly, and I tried to make light of it, but she'd started a train of thoughts that bothered me.

"Have you ever tried to find out where he got the thing?" she asked me.

"Eight times now I've tried to drag it from him," I told her, "but he'd make a clam garrulous by comparison. It's a secret."

"He's a queer man," she says, and went off with a far-away look in her eyes.

"Two days later she came to me with a spark in her glance.

"I have word for you," she whispers.

"I'm all ears," says I.

"Not all, but nearly," says she with a little chuckle that set the dimple to lancin'. 'Hark now! Bogardus spends an hour alone in the place below after you close it up at night. Twice a week he does this. I have it straight from a policeman.'

"I have long wished to beat up a cop," says I with some heat. 'As a class they offend me.'

"You'll leave this one alone, then," she said, laughin'. 'It's an old one, and my mother's cousin. He tells me that your friend sneaks in on Tuesday and Friday nights.'

"For some time I'd mistrusted that Bogardus was concealin' something from me, and it set the thoughts to gallopin' again.

"I'll watch for myself," says I.

"That night, it being Friday, I closed up the place at eleven or therabouts, and after walkin' around the block, hid myself behind a packin' case in an alley from where I could see the front door. Half an hour later and J. Bogardus navigates down the street and slips his key in the lock. I could see a light movin' back and forward, but nothing of what he was doing. When he had gone away I went over myself, but could find no trace of what he had been up to. He had a secret from me.

"A week after that, when I opened up



in the morning, I tripped over a razor strop that lay on the floor.

"'O-ho!' says I to myself, 'now what does this mean?' But I had to give it up, though the thing stuck in my mind.

"While I was deliverin' the usual discourse on the habits, family connections and personal attributes of the animal wonder the next afternoon, J. Bogardus dropped in.

"'Strange as it may seem, ladies and gentlemen,' I observed to the audience of twenty or so, 'I trust I do not jar your sensibilities too hard when I state that this remarkable beast is known to—shave twice a week!'

"To this day I have no idea what made me say such a foolish thing, but the assemblage snickered, and J. Bogardus turned a timid pea-green, and leaned twice as hard upon the ticket shelf. When the populace had departed, he came over to me.

"'Why would you say foolish things like that?' he says, with a wild look in his eyes.

"'They must have some amusement,' I answered him, turnin' away. 'Why should a thing like that disturb you?'

"'It—it doesn't,' he says, whisperin' and tryin' to swallow his Adam's apple. I looked at him in the eyes.

"'I never lie, myself, unless it's absolutely necessary,' I told him, with all the chill I could put into it, and opened the door to let in another mob. 'By the same token we had burglars in here a night or two ago,' I says.

"'Did they—steal anything?' he stutters.

"'Oh, no,' says I, as airy as a bird. 'They were the other kind. They left something—a razor strop.'

"He backed away from me as if he'd seen a dagger in my coat sleeve.

"'Perhaps they'll bring the brush and a chunk of soap next time!' I told him, and laughed in his face, for I knew he was as puzzled now as I was myself, and wonderin' how much I knew, which between us was not a thing. He went out a bit wobbly in the knees, and I saw nothing of him for a week, but I heard he was doing his best to force the distilleries to put on another shift.

"Trade was good, however, and I'd salted down enough cash to make the first payment on the small house with the green fence. It was a nice place. There was a bit of ground as big as a pillow case in the front, and an upstairs, and I could see myself standing at the head of the steps on a Sunday morning yelling for Myrtle to bring up my other shirt. Dreams are queer things.

"However, the best laid plans get a twist put in them, for on the next Monday morning when I opened up the store, I discovered that the educative and instructive museum of natural marvels had gone out of business during the night. The mysterious wonder of the animal world had passed to that land from which there is no return ticket. Ten minutes later I was bangin' on the door of J. Bogardus.

"'The jig is up!' I told him, breathless.

"'How do you mean?' gasps he, backin' away.

"'Exhibit A. has shuffled off this mortal coil,' says I, shovin' my way into the room.

"'Explain yourself,' says he, shiverin'.

"'The marvel of the faunal universe is dead,' I told him, feelin' it was better to get the worst over with.

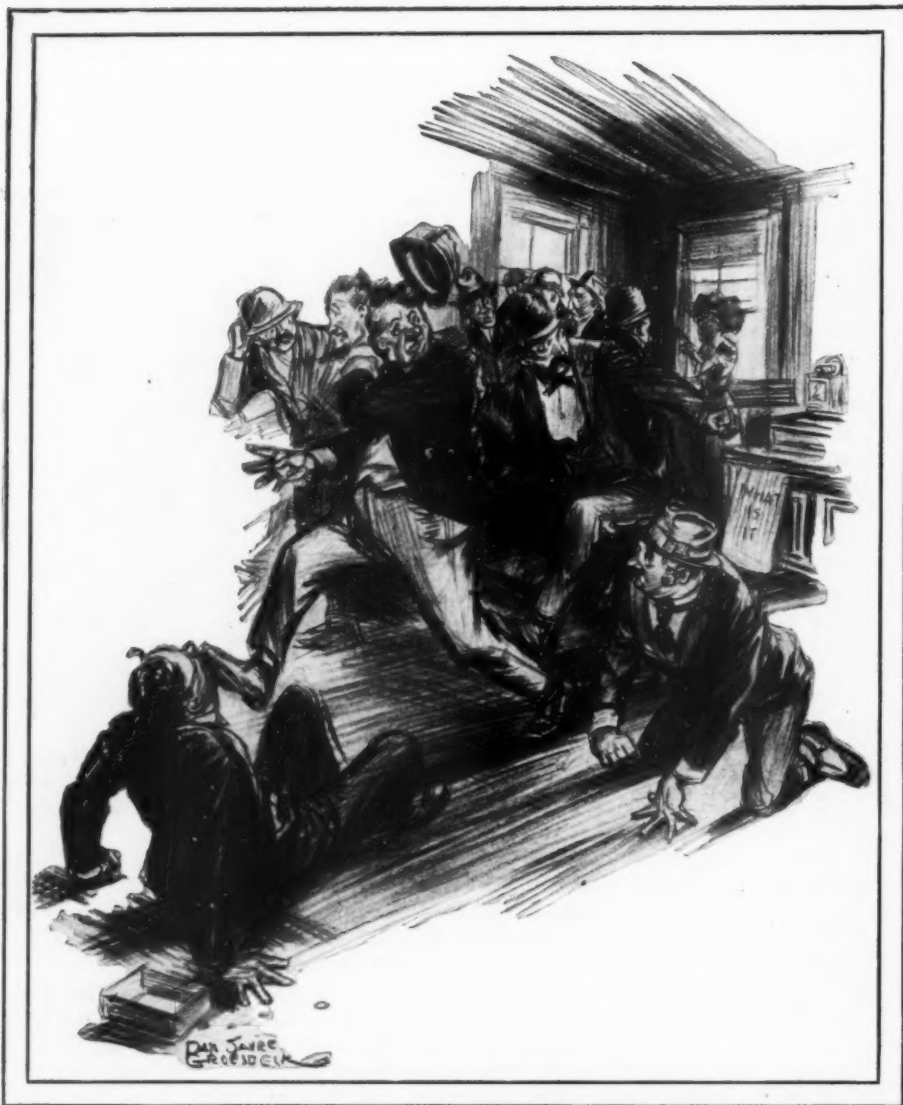
"'Huh!' he says with a scowl. 'I thought something was wrong.'

"'I thought his work in the interests of the total destruction of liquor had side-tracked his mentality.

"'Poor man,' I said, as gently as I could. 'Do I not make it clear to you that the graft has fled. Do I get it into that saucer of hominy you wear beneath your hair that starvation is peekin' over the transom? Hark! The beast has passed away in the night. Where do we hold the obsequies, and will there be many flowers?'

"He pulled the clothes up around his chin and curled up his nose.

"'Don't bang the door as you go out,' says he. 'I have no patience with a man of no imagination.' As I started, he sat up. 'One thing you might do,' he observed. 'Go you down to the place and hang out a sign that the museum is closed on account of a sudden demise in



"I was just breakin' nicely into a copious run of adjectives when the cataclysm broke forth. Instantly, I seemed to be sitting on the floor, while the crowd was tryin' to tear away the front of the store gettin' out."

the family, but will reopen to-morrow.'

"Late that night I was sittin' on the porch of the hotel, wonderin' what J. Bogardus had up his sleeve. Myrtle came outside and peered into the darkness.

"'Have you seen Thomas?' says she, anxious, and leaning over the rail.

"'Not since noon, when he followed

me up the stairs,' says I. 'But I wouldn't worry. Cats are like men. Once in a while they'll break over the conventional easements of existence, and show up red-eyed and sorry in the morning.'

"'I'll stand no such breaks from cats or men,' she says, 'and if you're plannin' now, you—well, I have my own methods.' Then she went inside.

"When I pushed aside the curtain next mornin' I'd been figurin' that about the whole of my daily labors would be confined to depositin' the corpse of the defunct in an adjacent ash-barrel, and so, when I squinted into the cage and caught a glimpse of a twin brother of the late incumbent lyin' there, and breathin' as soft and natural as could be, I sat down hard on a handy nail keg.

"Now, it was not in reason that beasts of that caliber and mystery were to be picked up like banana skins at an Eytalian picnic, so I looked long and hard at it, but in the end I opened the front door and polished up my flow of words. I had eighteen dollars before noon, and when Myrtle arrived about three the crowd was blockin' the door.

"Oho!" says she. "So he made good."

"Have a look," says I, and she tiptoed over cautious like. I had my back to her, and was just breakin' nicely into a copious run of adjectives when the cataclysm broke forth. Instantly I seemed to be sittin' on the floor, holdin' my head in my two hands, while the crowd was tryin' to tear away the front of the store in gettin' out. A large man with splay feet stepped on my face before I could get a focus on events, but I twisted away from him and scrambled to my legs, for I feared the poor girl was hurt.

"She stood there by the cage, holding the beast in her arms, and screaming.

"Oh, are you hurt, darlin'," she cried. "What did they do to you?"

"Hush, child!" I bawled at her. "Don't take on so! I'm not hurt!"

"You brute!" she screeched at me, and with one free hand hurled a chair.

"Here! What ails you, woman?" I says to her with indignation, and dodgin' the cash register.

"Look at the poor thing!" she cried, sitting down on the floor and rocking the marvel of the century in her arms. "Oh, Tom! Poor Tommy! Oh, the brutes!"

"I got one glimpse of what ailed her, and it struck me of a heap. There was the same queer, slithy thing with a penholder for a tail, like the other, *but this*

*one had a kink in it!* Just like a door had been slammed on it! Small wonder that the other had a cut on his back! Small wonder I'd found a razor strop in the place! So long as black cats could be found in the community there would be no lack of faunal miracles to puzzle the public! Well, well. It's a queer world, but at the time I wished that J. Bogardus had picked some other cat. I reached for Myrtle to take her in my arms and explain the case, but she boxed me on the ear and went out, leavin' me alone in the museum."

Francis lifted my glass and carefully mopped the table beneath it.

"And Myrtle?" I queried.

"Did you ever have a dream of love shattered into a sandblast?" he inquired.

I returned to my original question.

"You have not yet explained that bit of impressionistic artistry, there, on the wall," I said, pointing it out. Francis looked at it sorrowfully, and with small interest.

"That?" he said slowly. "Oh, that was an accident. My wife come in last night and spun a ketchup bottle at me. She missed me, and that's where it struck. The same, did you say, and not so much froth?"

As I was leaving the place, in the passage outside which leads to the sidewalk, I met a large lady with a faded blue bonnet and a black shawl. She stopped me.

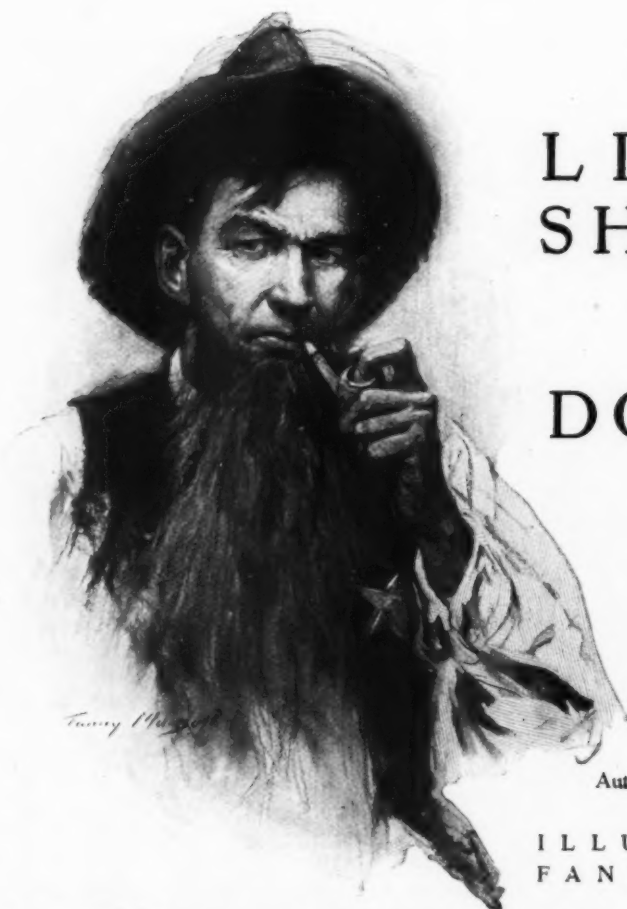
"Excuse me," said she. "Could you tell me is there a waiter named Francis inside?"

I stared at her, curiously. She weighed three hundred pounds, or perhaps a trifle more. On her chin there was a dimple that winked and chuckled, and her eyes were a china blue.

"Francis?" I repeated after her. "Why, yes. He has been telling me about his adventures in Phoenix, Arizona."

She looked at me with wide eyes, and shook her head.

"Arizona, is it?" she exclaimed indignantly. "Why, th' man's never been west of Jersey City in his life!"



# The LITTLE SHERIFF of DOERUN

by  
JOHN  
MILLER  
GREGORY

Author of "Rose of Sharon," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY  
FANNY MUNSELL

**S**OME years ago, Doerun county was a God-forsaken section of a Southern state whose lower portion was part good cotton-land and part swamp. The swamp of Doerun has been reclaimed since, but at that time the county was noted for its malaria, its mosquitoes and its sheriff, Billy Northern.

The malaria made the inhabitants of Doerun pumpkin-like of complexion, cadaverous and addicted to eating quinine in bulk and drinking quantities of lemonade and patent medicines whose principal ingredient was alcohol.

The mosquitoes from the swamp which began just outside the county seat swarmed over the county like the famed locust plagues of Egypt, only there must have been more of the mosquitoes.

Sheriff Billy Northern was Doerun's chief claim to fame. As his friends in the

county described him, he was about five feet two inches in height and weighed nearly a hundred and fifteen pounds. He was mild in manner, soft spoken like a woman, and had watery blue eyes and a wonderful beard, brilliant red, which flowed in waves over his breast to his waist. His beard was his pride and would have been a standing butt for the county's jokers, except that people who knew him didn't joke with the sheriff of Doerun county.

It was no little thing to be sheriff of Doerun county. Apart from the negroes, who outnumbered the whites by two to one, the county contained a rowdy element which tried to run things with a high hand. Law and order had no meaning to these men, especially when they were fired with the vile concoctions which took the place of liquor in the blind-tigers of the prohibition state.



Gradually during the first term of the mild-mannered little man with the red beard these gangs had been scattered; and, out of gratitude, the people of Doerun county each election year had sent back Sheriff Northern for successive terms until the office and the man became as one.

But trouble occasionally broke out, as a flash of flame will spring from a smoldering coal pile. Usually it was between the negroes and the whites. Nobody seemed to know how the fights would start, but frequently they were the result of some wild rumor that the negroes were hiding rifles and ammunition under their churches, or that some over-zealous preacher was urging an uprising of the blacks against the oppression of the cotton planters. It always ended by the little sheriff coolly swearing in a posse of deputies, who rode out in the silence of the night, and returned the next day or the day after with several sullen prisoners, black and white, who were tried and convicted at the next term of court and set to work on the county roads to meditate on their evil ways. Although many of them swore on conviction to "get" the sheriff, somehow their anger would cool by the end of their sentences, and the majority ended by swearing by instead of at the little upholder of the law.

One of these was Tobe Nelson, a giant black, with the strength of two men. He was of the cave-man type. His criminality usually was the outcrop of undirected energy, and, after the act was committed, he was deeply repentant. But the county didn't know this. To the men he was a "bad nigger;" the women and children feared his name; and he was a marked man to the deputies. Only the little sheriff helped Tobe to stay straight, and, as a result, the big negro loved him with an odd love that even the sheriff couldn't explain.

One day Tobe killed a man, and the sheriff went out in the swamp and got him. But he never brought him back, and strange to say, the little man has never regretted his failure. This is the story of the failure.

There was a report of trouble in the county and two deputies went to arrest

Tobe for a drunken spree. After Tobe's violent protest that he was innocent, a running fight followed. One of the deputies was killed and the other wounded. The wounded deputy, with his arm in a sling made from his shirt, rode back to town with his dead partner across the pommel of his saddle, and Tobe, thoroughly frightened, took to the swamp, desperately determined to get away or to die fighting if they came for him.

It was late in the evening when the deputy left his murdered burden at a little house on the outskirts of the town and sought the sheriff, who was taking the evening air on the porch of the rambling hotel across the square from the court house. He told his story quietly, because the sheriff had ordered that trouble with the blacks should be hushed as much as possible. There had never been a lynching in Doerun county since he had been sheriff, and he didn't propose to have one if human effort could prevent it.

The little man listened with half-closed eyes, drawing frequent long draughts on his pipe.

"That nigger aint going to surrender without a fight," said the deputy. "I've took him twice, and I know what I'm talking about."

"Has he got a gun?" the sheriff asked.

"He has by this time, and plenty of ammunition. The other niggers will see to that. The last I heard of Tobe, he was going south to the swamps. That means he will make straight for old Job Smith's place for grub."

Job Smith was an eccentric old character who lived on a little clearing in the swamps, from which he emerged but rarely. The sheriff smoked in silence when the deputy had finished. Planning, to the little man, was a slow process, but thorough and final. When he had reached his conclusion he arose and knocked the ashes from his pipe.

"I reckon I'll be goin' along," was all he said.

"Will you want me?"

"Not to-night. To-morrow you and two or three more can come. You'll find me around old Job's place."

Two hours later, when the moon rose to give him light, the little sheriff of



Doerun county rode out of town, a Winchester across his saddle and his long pipe sending spirals of smoke into the air behind him.

He rode through the little town on the side streets, so that no one would see him and ask where he was going, until he came to the outskirts. Then he cut across the field to the main road that wound through the cotton fields, lying white and silent against the black background of their stalks. The night was alive with the music of the Southern country, the distant croak of frogs in a pond and the metallic chirping of katydids and crickets. Occasionally a lightning bug would fly against the mane of his horse and becoming entangled in the hairs, would fight valiantly for its freedom, sending its phosphorescent flashes fitfully for help, until the sheriff freed it and it flew away.

At a turn in the road a black figure of an old woman thrust itself up from the roadside and waddled toward the shying horse.

"Marse Billy, is dat you?" came an agonized voice.

The sheriff reined his horse and peered down into the face of old Mammy Nelson, Tobe Nelson's mother. He had thought of her first when his deputy told him Tobe was in trouble. He had wished it was somebody else he was called upon to arrest and, perhaps, convict of murder.

The old woman went on hurriedly. "I knowed you would come erlong heah, Marse Billy, an' I come on over to stop you. You's after my Tobe, aint you? I heah he done shot a man. Marse Billy, is dey goin' to hang him ef dey ketch him?"

"You run along home, Mammy. We aint caught him yet, and maybe we wont get him," the sheriff parried.

"You'se gwine ter git him, Marse Billy; I know hit, sho." She fell down in the dust and started rocking to and fro in agony. The sheriff tried to find something to say, but, somehow, his mind was empty.

"Marse Billy, can't you let mah Tobe git erway? I done wukked for yo' people all my life, Marse Billy. I used ter belong to yo' grandfather, and I nussed

yo' father an' I nussed yo'. You aint a gwine to hang mah Tobe now, is yo', Marse Billy?"

"Tobe aint done right, Mammy," said the sheriff.

"I knowed dat chile would git in trubble. I done tole him so time and time ergin, but he don't pay me no mind. He jest dat ornery. But I done de bes' I could fer dat boy, Marse Billy, an' now I'm ole and wuffless, an' he's sendin' mah ole gray head to de grave in mis'ry. But I kain't hep it, Marse Billy; he's mah chile, an' I lubs him."

"I know you do, Mammy. It aint your fault. I wish I didn't have to do it."

"Marse Billy, if yo' jes' let dat nigger git erway dis time, I promise he wont never come back. I promise, so hep me God. Yo' and him's de onliest ones I got in de worl' now. If yo'll jes' let him go, Marse Billy, I'll wuk fer yo' twill my dyin' day fer nuffin'."

The little sheriff leaned from his horse and placed his hand on the woolly black head that was raised to him in supplication.

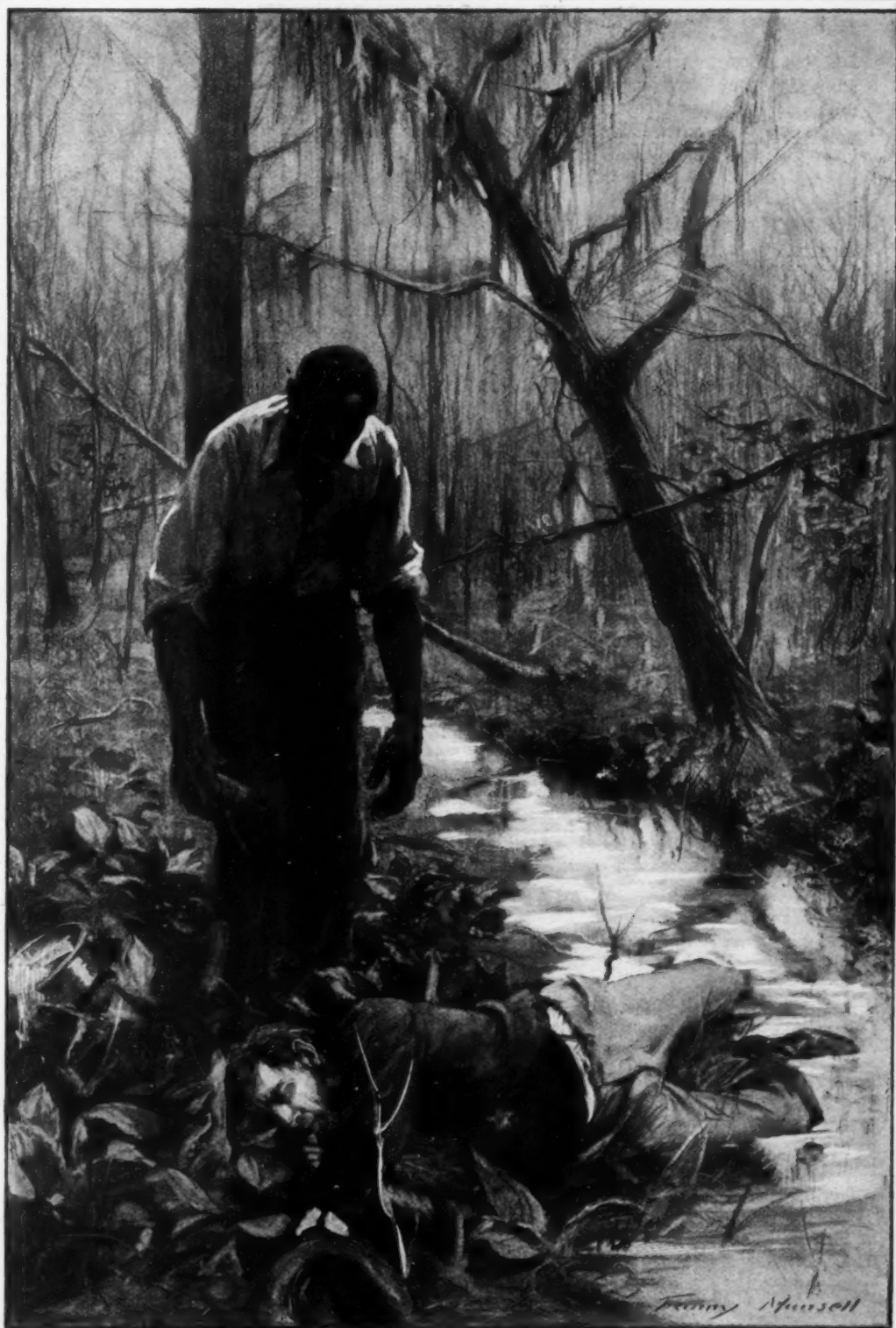
"There now, Mammy, you go on back to my house and tell the missus I sent you. I'll be back to-morrow, and maybe I wont get Tobe."

"I knowed yo'd do your duty, Marse Billy, an' ef yo' get to Tobe he'll come on back with yo', cause he's been raised to 'spect yo' des de same as ef he belonged to yo'. An' I aint got no hard feelin's, honey, cause I reckon dat's de law, but ef dat Tobe gits erway, I'll wuk dese hans ter de bone fer yo', Marse Billy, fo' God, I will."

As the sheriff cantered away, the sounds of her moans followed him. At a bend in the road he turned and saw her trudging slowly back to town.

By nine o'clock he reached the edge of the swamp and rode into a narrow pathway that led to old Jo's Smith's place. The swamp closed about him, its myriad noises swelling as he rode deeper into it. He had to move more slowly now, as the moon only filtered through the dense branches of the trees in spots, and these danced about the pathway like some live things for which he had no simile.

Occasionally he would come to little



The sheriff groaned and sank to the ground. At the sound a huge negro who had been lying on the moss sprang suddenly upright and turned toward him.

puddles of water where the road sank from sight, and he had to be careful of the alligator holes and pitfalls that might be beneath the slimy green mud. Once he almost rode into a brackish pool which lay in his path, but he pulled in his horse in time and skirted the bank with its dense rushes until he came to the other side, where the path again took up its course.

The loneliness of the swamp had communicated itself to him, but he pushed on, glancing back every now and then at the tortuous path behind him. A fog was beginning to rise and it spread itself about him, shutting him in, blinding him, billowing around him like a cloud of steam. He pushed on stubbornly, realizing that he might as well go forward as to turn back. Besides, he thought, Tobe Nelson was somewhere in front of him.

It must have been midnight when he stopped his horse and got to the ground. His legs ached, and it came to him that he was desperately hungry. He had brought a light luncheon of sandwiches, a bottle of water and a little package of coffee. He lighted a fire, boiled his coffee in a tin cup and ate his sandwiches. The coffee stimulated him and its warmth took out some of the stiffness and cold in his bones. After that he lighted his pipe and rested for a few minutes.

When he arose to start again, he startled a water snake which, attracted by the warmth of the fire, had drawn near and curled itself under a bush. The slick coil unwound and darted hissing toward a pool. Shivering, the sheriff's horse jumped aside, and the bridle that held him to a tree snapped with a jerk. The frightened horse dashed away, and the sheriff, in a momentary panic, running after his animal, came full tilt against a tree, and was stretched senseless on the ground.

When his senses came back to him, his brain was muddled. His head swam and he staggered as he stood up, so that he had to grasp a tree to support himself. Then he saw that no pathway stretched before him. There was only the swamp, dismal, black, portentous, with its little brackish pools in the

radius of his firelight, and beyond, only the density, the millions of noises and the groaning trees.

He took a firebrand from the coals and looked about, but the trees seemed to be revolving around him. Nowhere could he find a trace of the roadway. He started forward and stepped into a puddle of slime and mud. Waist deep he waded through it until he came to what seemed to be the path. With his firebrand held high above his head he went on until the brand burned down to his fingers and he had to drop it in the water. He turned to go back to his fire, but the fire had disappeared. The fog had shut it from view. He could see nothing but the blackness, which, like some tremendous spread of cloth, had been let down behind him.

For the first time since he had entered the swamp a sort of fear came over him. A silence seemed to rise over the noises. It seemed to weigh them down, encompass them, shut them in. It held him as in a vise and threw over him a mad desire to move, to go forward or backward, any way to get away from it.

He looked up to see if he could locate his position by the moon, but the vault of the trees above the swamp shut out the light, and only the blackness and silence beat down upon him. He tried to climb a tree, but the slime on his boots and his wet garments and the dank moss on the bark offered him no foothold, and he gave it up.

Another sound came to him, and it grew until it mounted into a drone like the buzzing of countless bees, and the mosquitoes fell upon him. Thousands of them swarmed about him, ravenous, sticking their tiny bills into him, it seemed, in hundreds of places, until maddened by the pain he rushed forward, struggling, battling with hat and arms. With every suspiration he felt himself drawing them into his nostrils, until he coughed and spluttered with the pain.

Then he felt himself falling, and he sank beneath the surface of a pool. The water rushed over his burning face and hands, and he experienced a sensation of pleasure. He stayed beneath the water as long as he could, and when he

rose to the surface the swarm of mosquitoes had passed.

He regained the shore and lay quiet in the slime until his strength came back. Then he realized that he was desperately thirsty and he squirmed back down to the pool and drank deep of the black water. He rose refreshed and stumbled on.

Now he began to realize the seriousness of his position. He knew he was lost. He would have to give up the chase for Nelson and try, somehow, to get to Job Smith's place and wait for his deputies. The mosquito bites did not bother him much now. When they began to burn he would snatch up some of the slime from a pool when he stumbled into it and wipe it on his face and hands. The cooling application seemed to relieve him.

The fight was beginning to tell on him. He ached in every joint, and his head felt as if it would split from the silence that beat into his ears. The dripping trees around him weighed him down with their overpowering sense of loneliness. He felt like screaming, but instead he fought on madly, desperately, with the determination that was characteristic in him.

He lost all sense of time and direction, and he caught himself mumbling words that fell from his lips in a jargon of sound. Occasionally his feet would strike a tangle of vines and he would fall sprawling, only to pick himself up and struggle painfully on. The brush reached out its thousands of hands and caught his clothes, tearing them to strips and lacerating his flesh until it bled. He felt the warm blood run down his face where the low-hanging tree branches lashed him as he ran blindly into them. Yet his knowledge that he must keep on was stronger than his physical strength.

He was desperately fearful now. It was a new sensation and terrible. He fought in vain to cast it off, but as he dashed through the swamp the fear grew to a blind terror which sent him forward running, stumbling, falling. Time and again he sprawled headlong into the water and felt the mud entering his mouth and nose and ears. Once he pain-

fully pulled himself from the mud and reached forth a hand for something to support him. He felt what he thought to be a half submerged log, and threw both arms around it. The log moved, and an alligator's tail swished over his head.

The knowledge of what it was filled him with a new fright. If he could see, he thought, it would not be so bad, but to fight the unseen terrors of the swamp was more than a man could stand and remain sane. He wondered if he was going to lose his mind alone in the swamp, and the thought galvanized him to action. With a shriek he rushed on, putting new speed into his weary legs, slipping, running full tilt against the trees, sprawling over the stumps that projected themselves above the water and mud in his way.

After a while he came to a little dry spot in the swamp on which the moon shone through a break in the trees. There was room on it to lie down. He was weary with the noises in his head, and he thought that if he would rest they would leave him and he could think better. Tobe Nelson had left his mind, and all the determination of his powerful will was concentrated on finding a way out of the swamps. He lay down on the moss and slept.

When he awoke the sun was beating into his face, and he sat up, wondering where he was and how he came there. His head was pounding rhythmically and he was burning hot all over. He put his hand to his face and it felt swollen out of all proportion. He laughed softly to himself, it felt so odd. He wondered how it would look. Then a thought came to him. Slowly, on all fours, he crawled to the water's edge where the sunlight struck it and peered in. The sight sent him into a paroxysm of laughter. The object that glared at him out of the water was the oddest he had ever seen. The face was huge and jumping, and a long red beard straggled down from it in the most peculiar fashion.

He tried to go back over the events of the night before, but his mind refused to act. Finally he gave it up in despair. Thinking made his head pound the more, anyway, so he made up his mind



not to bother about it. But he must get away.

He started to get up, but the pain in his legs threw him back upon the moss, so that he lay there in agony for a time, staring through the trees. When he felt easier he arose to his knees and started to crawl. He found he could move this way if he was careful. He dragged himself to the end of the clearing; then with great pain he began to push himself back through the swamp.

For a long time—it seemed hours to him—he kept moving, until at every motion he felt he would have to stop. He suffered intense agony, and it kept getting greater, if such a thing were possible. Once he sank in a sort of stupor and remained where he had fallen for a long time. When he regained consciousness, the light was growing dimmer. He was desperately hungry also, and his throat burned with a dry and parching thirst.

He pulled himself up on his hands and knees and started forward again. The pounding in his head had eased somewhat and his brain seemed clearer. The one thought in his

mind was the necessity of moving, so he kept on, somehow, while the shades grew deeper and the sounds of the swamp changed from the singing of birds to the croak of frogs and the clatter of the night bugs.

Again he came to a clearing and pulled himself out of the slime to dry land. The place seemed strangely familiar. Yes, he was sure he had seen it before. There was the water where he had seen the strange creature with the swollen,

manlike face and the jumping red beard. He groaned and sank to the ground.

At the sound, a huge negro who had been lying on the moss sprang suddenly upright and turned to him. It was Tobe



Nelson. He watched the little sheriff lying on the moss and babbling incoherently. In his hands the negro held a portion of a chicken, and there was a pan of water by his side. When he saw the sheriff was helpless he waited until the little man had recovered somewhat and again raised his face.

"Good evenin', sher'f," said Tobe. "I reckon you's lookin' fer me, aint yo'?"

For reply the sheriff motioned toward the water pan and the chicken, and the



"Pore little ol' sher'f," he said; "he always wuz a powerful good friend o' mine."

The light went down and the shadows of the night spread themselves over the bogs and the sleeping, sullen splotches of black water and brush, and the silence grew big again and drowned out the noises.

Tobe was thinking now in his dull way, wondering how he could save the sheriff without giving himself up to the law. He was not afraid of being found. He knew the swamp too well for that, and he knew that as long as he stayed in it, his mammy would creep down to the cane brakes at night with food and drink for him, and tobacco. He was resentful at the law for forcing him to stay out in the swamp, because he had felt justified in fighting when the other man had attacked him, and he regretted that he had to kill the deputy who would have taken him.

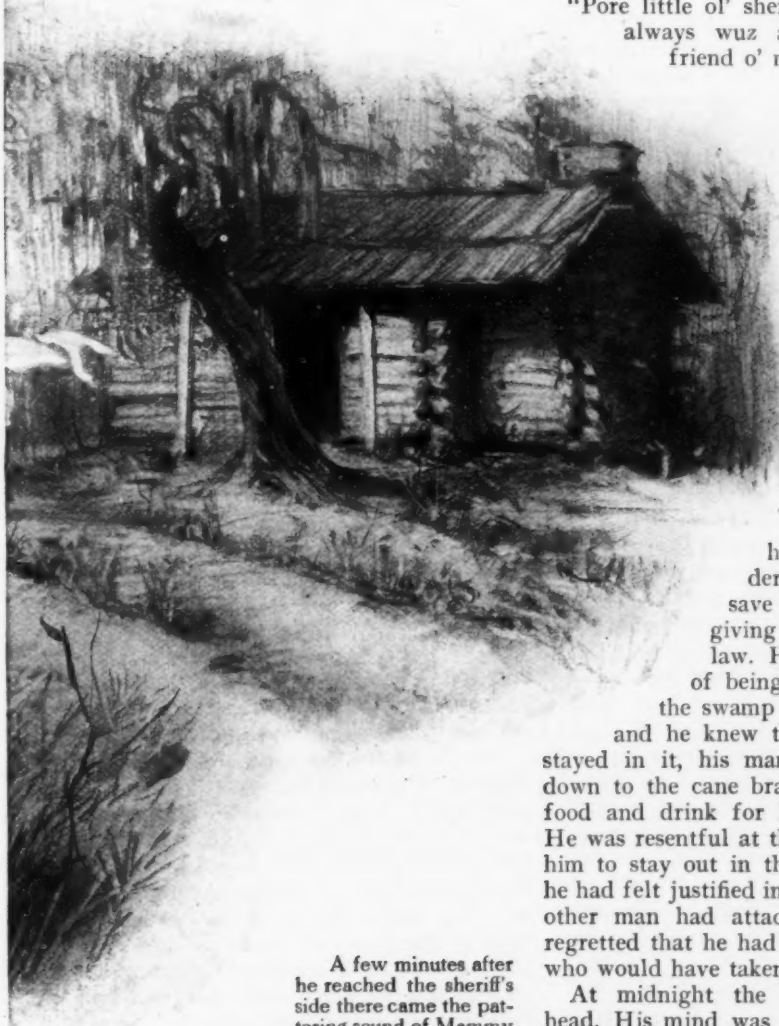
At midnight the sheriff lifted his head. His mind was clear now and he remembered. He watched Tobe in silence for a while across the fire, and when he spoke his voice was weak and shaky.

"Howdy, Tobe!"

"Lord, Marse Billy, I thought you wasn't ebber comin' to. I jus' been studyin' 'bout yo'."

The sheriff tried to rise, but fell back with a moan. "I'll be all right in a minute, Tobe; then I reckon I'll be taking you on back."

"I bin studyin' 'bout dat, too, Marse Billy. I bin studyin' 'bout dat ebber sence you come up heah. It aint so fur back to town when yo' knows how to git thar, but I reckon I'll have to take yo'



A few minutes after he reached the sheriff's side there came the pattering sound of Mammy Nelson's bare feet running.

negro brought them to him and let him eat and drink until he was satisfied. When the sheriff had finished, Tobe drew him up on the bank, fixed him comfortably, and, having built a fire, sat down beside it and watched the little man in silence. The sheriff was sleeping now, breathing heavily and tossing from side to side. Occasionally he would break out into wild ramblings. Once he spoke of old Mammy Nelson, and Tobe listened carefully. When the sheriff hushed, the negro smiled.

stead of yo' takin' me." He grinned good-naturedly, showing his white teeth.

Then the sheriff dropped again into his stupor and began to mumble senseless words. When the negro saw the moon directly over the moss bed he got up and leaned over the sheriff.

"Po lil ol' sher'f," he mused, "he sho' is all done up, but I reckon we'd better be gittin' erlong."

He carefully hid his water pan beneath a bush, removed the chicken bones and signs of his meal and ran the handle of his food basket under his belt so that the basket hung from his waist. Then he lifted the sheriff as a nurse lifts a child, shifted the burden to his back and plunged into the swamp.

Morning was breaking when he reached the edge and found his way through the cane brake. He was staggering from the weight of the sheriff, and the sweat poured from his black body and soaked into his shirt. On the edge of the cane brake he stopped and let the sheriff to the ground. He peered up and down carefully before he parted the canes and stepped through to utter two strange calls, something like an owl's hoot. A few moments after he had reached the sheriff's side, there came the pattering sound of bare feet running, and Mammy Nelson shoved her black head through the cane.

"Is dat yo', honey?"

"Yes'm, me an' de sher'f."

Her eyes fell on the little man lying on the ground.

"Is yo' done kill him?"

"No'm, but I reckon you'd better git 'im home. He done got lost in de swamp, an I reckon he's got de fever or somepin', he's car'n on so strange."

The old woman thrust her basket of food into Tobe's hands and lifted the sheriff in her arms.

"I'll git 'im home, Tobe, an' I reckon you'd better be gittin' back. Dey's lookin' fer yo'."

"Yes'm, I knows hit, but dey aint a-gwine to git me. I'll be gittin' out ob de county fo' long. I aint intendin' to let anybody ketch me, I aint. I'm goin' erway, and I'm goin' to stay."

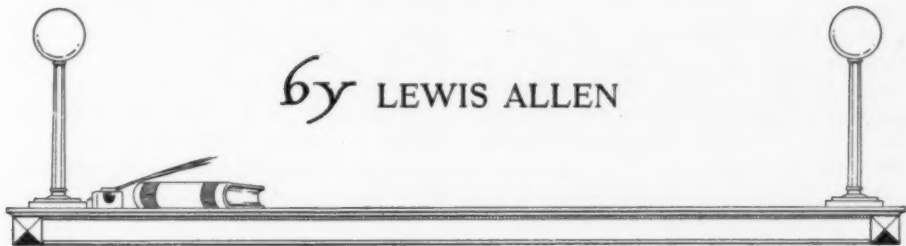
He was gone back into the cane, and the old woman stood and listened to the swishing sound of the canes as long as she could hear them move. Then, panting and struggling, she bore the sheriff back to her cabin. The next morning she had him taken home, where he remained under her careful nursing until the fever left him. Neither Mammy Nelson or the little sheriff referred to Tobe, but occasionally the sheriff would surprise the old woman standing on the porch looking toward the swamp.

The county never again heard of Tobe Nelson. He disappeared completely, as if the swamp had taken him. The swamp dripped on, silent, mysterious, impenetrable except to those who knew. The negroes of Doerun became afraid of it. The superstitious say that Tobe Nelson's spirit haunts the place, and vow that every night it roams, huge and black, singing a wild song that sounds like the drone of thousands of bees.

The little sheriff laughs when he hears these stories. He knows the sound in the swamp is the silence which nightly in a mighty crescendo rises above the drip-drip from the branches, the groaning of the shivering trees, the croak of frogs and the incessant clatter of the swamp's myriad denizens.

# Lawyer Perkins

by LEWIS ALLEN



ILLUSTRATED BY GRANT T REYNARD

**L**AWYER E. W. PERKINS was running blue baby ribbon in the lace yoke of a night gown.

From this you might glean that Lawyer Perkins was an effeminate chap, wherein you would be partly right—and considerably wrong. There was no question but what Lawyer Perkins was decidedly effeminate, but—

The full name of Lawyer Perkins was Elizabeth Winona Perkins. The "lawyer" part had been acquired only a few months. Her father already called her "Judge;" her friends laughingly alluded to her, and especially in her presence, as "Portia." But her mother, still in somewhat of a daze to think her little girl should have become a real lawyer, stuck to "Bessie." Whatever mothers say being just about right, she shall be known throughout this bit of her history as "Bessie."

Bessie's mother, passing through the upper hall at the moment, paused before the open door of Bessie's room to look in, smile, and ask, "What are you doing, dearie?"

Bessie held up her work for her mother to see.

"By the way, who is the caller down stairs?" asked Bessie.

"Only Judge Bell," her mother answered.

Judge Bell had been a life-long friend of the family. To most people he was an

important and dignified personage, being judge in the Superior Criminal Court in Lyme County. But ever since Bessie could remember—and before there had been a Bessie to remember—Judge Bell had been running into the Perkins home, either for a few minute's chat, or for dinner and an evening's visit. So, naturally enough, he was not at all awe-inspiring to the Perkinses, which explains why Mrs. Perkins said "only" in stating that he was a caller.

There was a time when Judge Bell was no more awe-inspiring to Bessie than to her parents, but since she had struggled through four years of law school to gain her admission to the bar—four long, studious, hard years—she felt that she could appreciate what it meant to rise to the honor and dignity of the bench.

"Judge Bell!" exclaimed Bessie, "why he may be dropping pearls of legal wisdom by the quart, and I must not miss any of them, Mumsie dear!" Whereupon she laid aside her baby ribbon and the garment and, pinching her mother's cheek lovingly, passed out to the heavily carpeted stairway.

Her natural impulse was to dash down the stairs two at a time, but inasmuch as Judge Bell was there, and inasmuch as she had become a "really and truly" lawyer, she thrust aside this impulse, or smothered it, or ignored it, or whatever people do to avoid obeying im-

pulses, and proceeded down the stairs with dignity.

She had reached the first landing and could look down through the folding doors into the library, where she caught a glimpse of the judge and her father. At that moment she heard the judge say:

"I am going to give Bessie a case tomorrow."

Bessie's heart nearly stopped beating. Perhaps it did skip a couple of throbs, but it promptly made up for it by fluttering outrageously and Bessie sat down on the stair landing to clutch at it—the heart, not the stair.

Small wonder her heart fluttered. In the three months since her graduation from law school she had made out oodles of papers—that is the way she expressed it to her father and mother—wills, mortgages, deeds and such things, earned a little money and declared herself well started, yet right down in her heart—the heart that was just then fluttering so wildly—she had longed for weeks for a real case.

"Just a little case where I can appear in court against a man lawyer," she had told herself; "where I can examine witnesses and address the jury." And now, slap-bang! here it was!

Make whatever comment you wish, Bessie sat perfectly still and listened. She wanted to know more of that case and she couldn't wait to walk down the remaining half of the stairs. It flashed across her mind that the judge, being a close friend of the family, had heard of some little case and, speaking in her behalf, had procured her the client.

"You are going to give Bessie a case?" repeated her father, Yankee fashion, but with about the same intonation he would have used in saying "Uh-huh?"

"Yes," continued Judge Bell, "that Barrett case."

"Barrett case? Barrett case?" repeated Perkins, trying to recollect such a case.

There was a gasp from the stair landing, but no one heard it. Bessie had arisen in her eagerness to hear what the judge was about to say. Down she sat again, plump, on that step, and her face became quite the color of the garment

into which she had, a moment before, been running blue baby ribbon.

For to Bessie the "Barrett case" had a perfectly clear meaning; and little wonder it took both her breath and her color, for it was a *murder case*!

"Oh, I doubt if you would have heard about it, Sam," said Judge Bell, apologetically, "as it's a cheap sort of case, from a lawyer's standpoint. Barrett is a—well, he never shone in the society columns of our newspapers."

"But what is it, and how can you give it to Bessie?" queried Perkins.

"It is a murder case, quite simple, and—"

"Wha-a-at!" Perkins fairly shouted.

"Nothing to be excited about," began Judge Bell when he was again interrupted by Bessie's father.

"But how can you give it to her?" insisted Perkins.

Judge Bell laughed. "You're a fine architect, Sam," he said, "but as a lawyer you couldn't draw a plan for a legal hencoop. Allow me to explain."

Perkins nodded.

"I am not supposed to discuss this because I have to sit—of course, our talk—" And the Judge waved his hand, a gesture indicating that he knew it would go no further. "It is like this: this man Barrett killed—that is, he is charged with killing a man."

Again Bessie, on the stair landing with head tilted a bit sidewise and her eyes like saucers, gasped. The moment the judge said "Barrett killed," even though he did correct himself, it flashed through her mind, "Lordy, what a break! He's prejudiced already!"

But she strained more than ever to hear.

"Well, William," and there was a trace of a smile about Perkins' mouth, "nearly all murderers kill some one."

"Eh? Oh, ah, yes, what I was getting at Sam, is this: Barrett is charged with murder. He's a man without means. Hasn't a cent. Never had, never will have. The state is bound to supply him with counsel. It falls upon me to appoint counsel. Now, between us, Sam, don't build any expectations. Bessie hasn't a—well, all I thought was that it would be fine practice for her."



"But if there's no chance of her winning the case—"

"Hush, Sam, remember I didn't say that. Remember, you never can tell what a jury will do—"

"It is mighty good of you, William. I am sure Bessie will understand. It's just for the experience."

The Judge nodded.

"I doubt," he added, "if she will take it."

Bessie's mouth had been open wide, to aid her in hearing. When she heard the judge express his doubts about her accepting the case her mouth closed so suddenly and so firmly that her teeth clicked.

That expression of doubt in her courage, together with a feeling that Barrett, whoever he was, didn't seem likely to get a square deal, brought her back to her normal self with a snap. With a smile on her lips she tripped lightly down the remaining half of the stairs and entered the library.

"Good evening, your honor," she said gaily, making a profound bow.

"How is our youngest and, by far, the handsomest legal light this evening?" asked the judge, rising gallantly.

"Seeking whom she may devour—or save," laughed Bessie.

The judge flashed a keen glance at her, but her smiling lips masked any meaning there might have been in her reply.

"What do you know of the Barrett case, Bessie?" asked the Judge.

"Oh, yes," began Perkins, "William says—"

But Judge Bell silenced him with a look. "Allow a lawyer to tell his own story, always—"

"Barrett," began Bessie, fitting her finger tips together and looking at the ceiling as if trying to refresh her memory. "Oh, yes, isn't he the poor chap held on the charge of killing a milkman and robbing him?"

"He's the poor chap, with the accent on the 'poor,'" answered the Judge; "so poor, in fact, that the State will have to furnish him with counsel. There is only \$500 in it, with \$200 more for expenses. I imagine it will take about \$500 to get up any sort of a defense for him. I am

to assign him counsel at the preliminary hearing to-morrow. If you think—if you want to try—"

"Do you mean," asked Bessie, quite calmly, "that you are thinking of appointing me?"

"Don't be offended—"

"Why you dear, dignified Uncle Sam! Now that I've expressed my appreciation of you in the way I used to address you before, by becoming a lawyer, I put myself in fear and trembling of you, I will say, 'I accept the case with gratitude, your honor!'"

"Good girl—I should say, respected fellow member of the legal fraternity—attend the hearing to-morrow at 10 A. M. and you shall be appointed counsel for one William Barrett. Now, no more shop talk to-night." And the Judge helped himself to one of Perkins' cigars.

Bessie went to the sideboard of the pantry, hunted up lemons and sundry other things and mixed the sort of drink both her father and the Judge dearly loved, but it must be admitted her hands trembled as she mixed it.

At 10 A. M. the next day, court opened. At 10:15 William Barrett, who, according to the warrant read by the clerk, "did then and there feloniously assault one Edgar Stevens with a knife, inflicting such wounds that the said Edgar Stevens did then and there die," was asked if he had counsel.

"No sir—your honor," said Barrett, very pale of features and watery of eyes, "but I didn't—"

"You are not to plead until you have counsel," said Judge Bell, not unkindly. "The state will furnish you with such, according to provision of the law. Have you any preference?"

Barrett stared hard at the Judge a moment, until the meaning of all that had been said was clear to him.

"No sir—your honor, I'd rather leave it to you to pick him out," declared Barrett.

At 10:18 Bessie Perkins, otherwise known as Lawyer E. W. Perkins, was appointed counsel for William Barrett.

At the word "Miss" from the Judge, prefixing the name "Perkins," poor Barrett turned and looked at Bessie, who



tried to smile reassuringly at him. His lower jaw dropped.

"Great Cats!" he groaned audibly, "*a girl!*"

"Bang!" went his honor's gavel, which promptly squelched the titter that arose. To Bessie's credit be it said she did not flush. Instead she looked at Barrett and smiled. Then she stepped to his side and whispered.

At 10:21 the clerk said: "Stand up."

Barrett stood up.

"What say you, guilty or not guilty?"

"She says I aint guilty," said poor Barrett, still dazed.

Davis, the prosecuting attorney, wanted the case to come to trial as speedily as possible. Bessie sighed, for that meant the State believed it had a copper-riveted, non-leakable case.

"Counsel for defense needs time to prepare its case, your honor," said

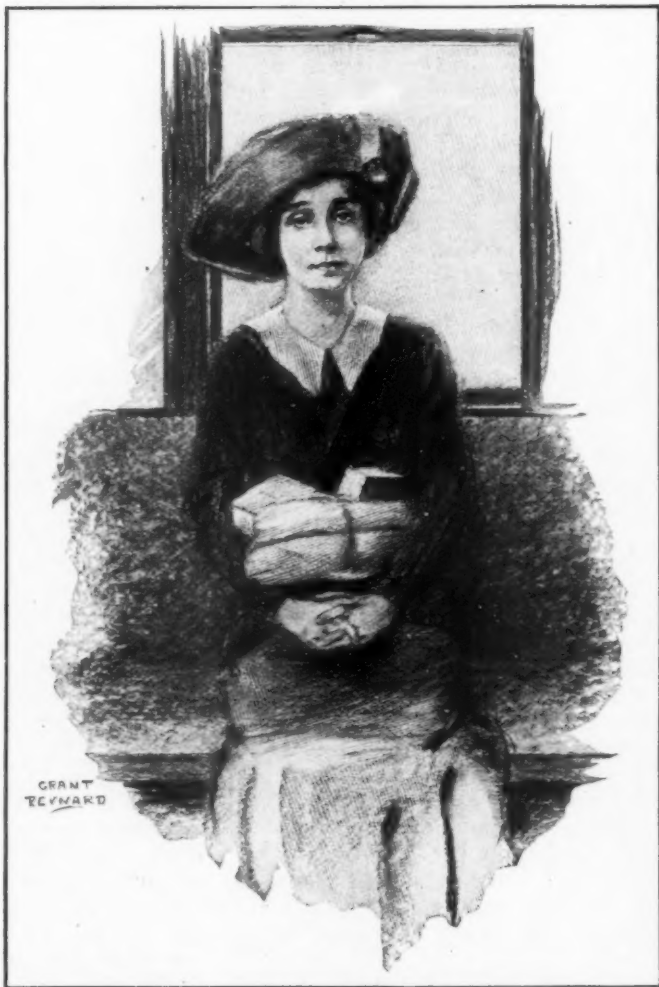
Bessie, when, at the Judge's bench, she was in conference with the prosecuting attorney and the Judge. "I would ask that the date be fixed for June 5th."

"That's agreeable," said Davis quickly.

Judge Bell raised his eyebrows, but otherwise showed no surprise, and the date was set, but in his heart he felt a bit sorry for Bessie. "Why didn't the child ask for three months, instead of three weeks?" he wondered.

They took Barrett back to his cell. Bessie followed.

"Shall I bring him out here, Miss?" asked the jailer.



Bessie visited Dr. Galvin first. She waited in the ante-room for patients and sought his advice about "headaches."

"Oh, no, I'll go in his cell, please; you may lock us in and send your guard out of earshot," answered Bessie. And she tried not to shudder when she found herself actually locked in a narrow cell with a man charged with a brutal murder.

Barrett gave Bessie the only chair in the cell and sat on the edge of the cot. He gazed at her steadily, and somewhat mournfully.

"Honest to Gawd, Miss, are you goin' to be my lawyer?" he asked, suddenly.

A stinging reply was on the tip of her tongue; next she wanted to laugh; but she controlled both emotions and,

returning Barrett's mournful gaze quite steadily, she replied:

"Yes, Barrett."

"I—" Barrett hesitated. It suddenly occurred to him that they might believe a handsome girl quicker than a smart man lawyer. It did not occur to him that by any possible chance a woman could be as smart as a man.

"Well?" encouraged Bessie.

"Nothin'," said Barrett, listlessly.

"When I said I was going to defend you, Barrett, I meant that you were going to defend yourself—"

"I aint no lawyer!" ejaculated Barrett in dismay.

"What I mean," Bessie explained patiently, "is that the only way you can get help is by telling me the whole entire and absolute truth. Of course you know that if you killed Stevens—"

"But I didn't!" exclaimed Barrett.

"If you killed Stevens," persisted Bessie, "that does not mean you will have to change your plea. Even if you confess to me and I advise you to confess in court and throw yourself on the mercy of the Judge, you do not have to follow my advice."

"I didn't kill him," stubbornly repeated Barrett.

"Let us go over this together. I have all the papers about the crime. Stevens was killed in South Lyme at a quarter after midnight, at the corner of Blossom and Main Streets, just as he was starting for the stables to get out his milk wagon and begin morning delivery. One of the blows of the knife smashed and stopped his watch which was in the breast pocket of his coat. That is how they know what time he was mur—killed. Now—"

"But I wasn't nowhere near South Lyme at a quarter past midnight that night," insisted Barrett.

"We have got to be honest with each other, Barrett," said Bessie, sadly. "I'll begin being honest with you by saying I think you did kill him—"

She stopped short at the expression of utter despair that came over Barrett's features. She had never seen a man weep. He broke down and sobbed. "Now," she thought, a bit exultantly, "he is about to confess," but nothing of the sort happened.

"You'll get me hung, all right, all right," he said finally.

"But, Barrett, I'm going to be plain with you. Your reputation is bad. You have been convicted of stealing; your word is worthless. You say you were nowhere near South Lyme at twelve-fifteen that night, yet how can I believe you when Dr. Galvin told the police, and will come into court and swear to it that he saw you in front of Wellington's market, which is at the corner of Blossom and Main Streets, where Stevens was killed, at exactly midnight!"

"Does he say that? I aint seen the papers? Now, what's Doc. Galvin got against me? I aint never done nothin' to him—"

"He has nothing against you, Barrett; he is simply doing his duty as a citizen—"

"He's a liar, he's a—"

"Then you know him?"

"Yes, I know him. I used to take care of his hosses 'fore he got a auto'."

"And he knows you? Oh, Barrett, I'm afraid—"

"I tell you I wasn't in South Lyme after 11 o'clock. I got the last car into Lyme then," insisted Barrett.

"What were you doing in South Lyme at all?" insisted Bessie.

"You want me to be honest, and I'll tell you: I went over there to steal something—and I stole it."

"That may help you, that and the conductor on the last Lyme-bound car, if he can remember you—no, it wont, for the car-barn is in South Lyme and the car goes back there; you could have gone back—"

"But the conductors know that, too," said Barrett, "and I can prove I stole somethin'; it was Old Horton's bronze dog on his lawn. I was goin' to sell it to a junk man I know, when I met Abe Klinger and sold it to him for two dollars. He beat me down, but I had a thirst and had to get the price that night."

"Then what next?"

"Came back to Lyme on the last car, I tell you, and was pinched before I could buy a drink. Gee, I thought they wuz quick to get me for stealin' that junk, and I near laughed my head off

when they tells me it was for murder. I aint laughed much since," he added mournfully.

"Barrett," suddenly exclaimed Bessie, "I'm going to believe you. I'm going to verify what you have told me. If you have lied I'm going to throw up the case, and then every juryman will know before he's drawn, that you are guilty or else I would have stuck by you."

"I dunno much about veryfryin' it, but I betcher you can prove it all right," declared Barrett.

"Very well; I will try and prove it," answered Bessie. "I will see within a few days. If you talk to anyone at all they'll hang you sure. Don't worry now; just think over what I said about confessing."

She rattled the grated door and a keeper released her.

Bessie went home convinced that Barrett had killed the man. Before night she had alternated about a dozen times between feeling that he must be guilty and believing him to be a victim of circumstances. At dinner, she leaped up from the table and rushed to the telephone.

"Bessie should never have taken such a case; it is driving her distracted already," complained her mother.

"Hush!" said Perkins, listening to Bessie in the library, at the telephone.

"Mr. Horton?" she was asking. "Yes, did you have a bronze dog on your lawn—it was?—Oh, good!—Oh, no, I didn't mean that, I was thinking of something else. This is Miss Perkins—yes, Miss Perkins, the lawyer—How did I know?—Bring it back at once?—How dare you?—Don't be silly over a hideous bronze dog—No, I will *not* explain now—Good-by." And snap went the receiver.

"He did, he did, he stole it—good—fine!" exclaimed Bessie, returning to the table. After a while she explained.

"Don't put any faith in that, my dear," said her father; "he could have stolen the dog and killed Stevens also."

"Horton asked me if I had a hand in stealing it," giggled Bessie irrelevantly. Somehow the discovery that Barrett had told that much truth made her happy; it gave her just the shred of faith in him she needed.

Four days Bessie worked. She visited Dr. Galvin first. Of course, she did not question him, for he was the State's star witness. She waited in the ante-room for patients and sought his advice about "headaches." It was a disappointing visit. Dr. Galvin was a man above reproach, intelligent, honest and sincere.

She found Abe Klinker, and at the end of five minutes he was so frightened he took her to his junk shop and showed her the bronze dog. It was smashed to bits, but there was no mistaking it. He did not know Barrett, but his description of the man he bought the stolen bronze dog from fitted Barrett to a nicety. Point number two where Barrett had told the truth.

Barrett said he had waited patiently from 11 o'clock that night until two the next morning on "Sweeney's" doorstep, because that was the only place at which he could buy liquor at that time, and as Sweeney was at a wake, he was sitting there when arrested.

Dr. Galvin had been called when Stevens' body was found. His services as a physician were not needed, for the man was beyond medical aid; but he remembered, he told the police, seeing Barrett on that same corner at midnight. That explains why South Lyme and Lyme were both scoured until Barrett was found waiting patiently for Sweeney to return and sell him liquor for the two dollars he had gained through the sale of the stolen bronze dog. All these things Bessie learned in her efforts to find some bit of evidence.

The third day passed after her visit with Barrett. Again she was at dinner with her father and mother.

"The conductor!" she shouted, and leaped from the table.

"Bessie!" exclaimed her distressed mother, "if you do not drop this horrible murder case at once I'll put you in a sanitarium."

"That for you, Mumsie," laughed Bessie, kissing her worried mother. "Father," she added, "I want you to come over to South Lyme with me to-night."

"I'll have plenty of time to-morrow, Bess," Perkins answered.

"To-morrow wont do. I must talk



"Father," she added. "I want you to come over to South Lyme with me tonight."

with the conductors to-night, the night ones, until I find out."

"Pretty fierce to have a lawyer in the family, eh, mother?" said Perkins, but at nine o'clock he set forth with Bessie.

At the car barn she waited for the right car, after learning from the night superintendent which conductor it was that had the last car back to Lyme on the night of the murder.

The conductor was an intelligent chap. He remembered Barrett; he even remembered taking him back to Lyme on that car. "I told the police that, but they laughed at me," said the conductor; "they said I was probably mistaken. Of course, when they told me Dr. Galvin saw him where the murder was a quarter of an hour before it happened, I couldn't dispute the Doc. He's smart and honest and has no object in lying. I believe him, especially since he says he knows it was exactly midnight, because he had been making three night sick calls and looked in the Wellington Market window where he could see the clock, and it was exactly midnight."

"Of course, and thank you," said Bessie, discouragement in every line of her face.

"We might as well go over the ground," she told her father. "I've been out here in the daytime; now, I'll go at night."

Perkins was tired. Eleven o'clock was beyond his bed time. He stood on the corner at Blossom and Main Streets while Bessie walked back and forth, looked up and down the street, paced distances and shook her head sadly. A light was kept burning in the Wellington Market all night, as in many other shops, to discourage burglars. Bessie



looked in the window thoughtfully. "Yes," she told herself, "it is light enough to see the clock. I wonder—I—why—Oh!"

"What is it, Bess!" exclaimed Perkins, wheeling and going to her.

Bessie was staring in the window.

"I—never mind, Father; find a drug store—get a telephone. No, I want telephone; help me find where Wellington—the butcher—lives!"

"Are you hysterical, or is this—"

"Father, do you think I'm altogether a fool?"

"No, dear," said Perkins, and he meant it. Together they found Wellington. He had not retired. Bessie had a few words with him on the veranda of his home. As she started to go, she said, "I couldn't wait until to-morrow. Sorry to trouble you. Remember now, absolute secrecy."

"We've missed the last car," complained Perkins.

"I'll pay for the ride home, a regular joy ride," laughed Bessie and she got an auto' from the nearest garage to take them home.

The nearer the day for Barrett's trial came, the happier Bessie seemed to be. She worked like a Trojan. She visited Barrett many times, until even he began to smile.

"That girl's got Barrett jollied into believin' he's goin' to get off," the jailer told Davis, the prosecuting attorney.

"Just bluffing to keep up her courage," said Davis. "Too bad, though, to make Barrett think that. He hasn't a show. He'll swing sure."

The trial opened. Selecting the jury took only a short time, so by the end of the first day the State had presented nearly all its witnesses—the man who found the body, the coroner, the officer who arrested Barrett on Sweeney's doorstep and Dr. Galvin. The officer told of finding two dollars on Barrett, and that Barrett couldn't explain where he got it. Dr. Galvin told of looking in the window of the Wellington Market and seeing the clock which, he said, was at exactly midnight. Other witnesses testified that Barrett was a thief, a man of no reputation, and that he seldom, if

ever, had more than fifty cents in money at one time.

By the close of the day Barrett's chances for freedom seemed about as good as the chances of a red hot coal freezing in a barrel of gasoline.

The next day Bessie called Mr. Horton to the stand. He told about the theft of his bronze dog that had ornamented his lawn for years. A policeman testified that he had seen the dog there for years and that Horton reported the theft to him. Next came the conductor. He told about Barrett riding back from South Lyme to Lyme on the last car.

"Did you tell anyone about this?" asked Bessie.

"I told the police and Lawyer Davis, there," replied the witness.

"Did they ask you to be a witness?"

"No sir—I mean ma'am," said the conductor.

"Did they say Barrett could have got back to South Lyme some way?"

"Object!" shouted Davis.

"Objection sustained," ruled Judge Bell, trying to look severely at Bessie.

Prosecuting Attorney Davis could not shake the conductor's testimony.

Bessie called him again after Davis was through. It was the first sur-rebuttal testimony during the trial.

"When you told Mr. Davis here about Barrett being on your car, did he make any remark?"

"Yes ma'am."

"You may tell the court what he said to you."

"He said my testimony didn't amount to anything, or wouldn't amount to anything, because he guessed Barrett could have got back some way."

"Objection has been sustained on that reply!" shouted Davis, angrily.

"Your honor," said Bessie, "objection was not sustained on that as a reply, but as a question, if I remember correctly. Now it is a reply."

"The reply is admitted," said his honor, trying as hard this time to keep from smiling at Bessie as he had before to frown at her.

Abe Klinker was called and told of paying Barrett two dollars for the bronze dog. Then Mr. Wellington was called. He admitted his name was Wel-



lington, that he was proprietor of a market and a lot of other apparently foolish but quite necessary things.

"Have you a clock in your market?" asked Bessie.

"No," answered Wellington. He said it quietly.

Judge Bell sat up and peered at Wellington over his spectacles. Dr. Galvin stared at Wellington in open-mouthed amazement, while the prosecuting attorney became fairly purple with suppressed emotion.

"Did you ever have a clock in your market?"

"No," responded Wellington.

"You sell meat in your market?" asked Bessie.

Wellington looked amazed. "Why—er—yes, of course; I've always sold meat—"

"Yes," will be sufficient, Mr. Wellington," said Bessie, kindly.

"Do you," she continued, "sell meat by liquid measure, linear measure or—?" And here Bessie paused.

Wellington snorted in disgust and amazement.

"I sell it by weight," he said, curtly. There was a broad grin on the face of juror number 4. He also was a market proprietor.

"In order to sell meat by weight you have—you use—" Bessie paused again.

Wellington suddenly remembered something and grinned.

"I use scales," he volunteered.

"Do you use platform scales, or the old-fashioned steel-yards?"

"Neither; I use the spring scales."

Here Bessie reached beneath her table and drew forth a large bundle. Removing the wrapper she disclosed one of the ordinary, round, dial-faced spring scales with a white enameled face.

"Are these your scales?" asked Bessie.

Wellington nodded. "Sure—er—yes Miss, of course they are; I loaned 'em to you."

"Where did they hang in your market?"

"Back of the cutting block," replied the market man.

"You may show by this," said Bessie, unrolling a large sketch of the front of Wellington's store, together with a flat plan of the interior, "you may show the gentlemen of the jury where the scales hung."

Wellington left his seat and stood before the jury while he pointed it out.

"You leave a light burning in your market all night?"

"Yes, Miss."

"From the outside, looking through your market window, can one see these scales at any time of the night?"

"Yes, Miss."

"When the scales are idle, that is, when there is nothing on the plate suspended beneath this dial, where is the indicator?"

"Where it is now," answered Wellington.

"Or, in other words, when idle, the hand that indicates the weight, is in the same relative position as both hands of a clock at either exactly noon or exactly midnight?"

"Exactly," said Wellington.

By this time the prosecuting attorney had turned a sort of pale pea green, while the sheriff had difficulty in keeping order.

"And you never had a clock in your market?"

"Never," replied Wellington.

"That is all. Mr. Davis, will you question—"

But the prosecuting attorney shook his head. He was a good loser; enough so to join the others in congratulating Bessie when it was all over.



ILLUSTRATED BY  
GAYLE PORTER HOSKINS

# Buck Fleehearty Goes A-Wooing

by ——— ELMORE  
ELLIOTT PEAKE

**H**E was not a frisky sort of man. His bovine stolidity had won him in the camp such affectionate sobriquets as Putty-mug, Pieface, Doughball, etc., all of which he accepted with perfect amiability. He was a sober man, and the more he drank the soberer he grew. About the time the other boys got to clogging on Ike's bar, Buck's eyes would fill with tears; and at that stage of the carousal when whisky-glasses were tossed in the air to be smashed with the boys' six-shooters, Buck would glue his face to the sticky table and emit a series of stentorian boo-hoos that Ike declared would have made the bawling of a carload of calves sound like the raspings of a senile katydid. It was his way of having a good time.

He was no drunkard, however. He appeared in Buffalo Horn only on Sundays. The other six days of the week he burrowed like a mole on his claim, which lay eight miles up the canyon. Worked thus, the claim paid him about ten dollars a day. No other man in the Horn, with the possible exception of Sing Dong, the "Chink," would have stuck a pick into such low-grade dirt;

for ten dollars a day was considered a pauper's pittance in that land of fevered dreams of wealth. Nevertheless, Buck saved half of what he earned, even with coffee at two dollars a pound, flour at twenty dollars a sack, and whisky at thirty cents a drink.

He was no miser, either. A rag carpet covered his cabin floor, a geranium bloomed in his little four-light window, and he owned the only phonograph in Cactus Valley. It was a cheap little machine with a battered tin horn, and it shrieked on the high notes like a dry axle. But it furnished nectar and ambrosia for Buck's lonely soul. Like an obedient jinnee, it brought the great world to his humble hearth—the world of music and mirth, song and speech, crashing military bands, the chime of bells—a world which Buck had never known, for, even before burying himself in this waterless, western waste, his path in life had been as lowly as the grassy tunnel of a field-mouse.

He turned out, however, to be the chief figure in a drama never to be forgotten in the Horn. One morning, mounting on his gray mule Barney, he rode up to the Pea Green hotel. Lady-

finger Offut, the Horn's Beau Brummel, who dived only with the spades found in a pack of cards, sat on the porch in a tilted chair, relating an adventure to half a dozen other Horners. Buck waited until the story was done, then stepped forward with a pale face.

"Boys," said he, huskily, "I've struck it rich."

And he had. Two weeks later four capitalists from San Francisco stood over the ledge of gold-laden quartz and bid against one another for the claim, until finally there fell upon Buck's singing ears the words:

"One million dollars, Mr. Fleehearty, and not a cent more!"

Silence followed. The gathered population of the Horn scarcely breathed. Then Buck, after a gulp or two, said faintly: "It's your'n, Mr. Gray."

He reserved his cabin, and for a couple of months was employed as a guard by the new owner, at ten dollars a day. Then he asked to be relieved and a new man was sent out. The following Sunday he once more rode up to the Pea Green.

The boys recognized the mule before they did Buck. He had undergone a startling transformation. His face was smooth-shaven, richly variegated with razor slashes. He wore a suit of black clothes as wrinkled as a rhino's hide from its years of repose in the bottom of his trunk. His flannel shirt had been thrown aside for a pink one with pleated bosom, which was topped off with a celluloid collar and a white lawn tie. His

boots had been replaced by a pair of tan oxfords strung with black laces. His crowning glory was a straw sailor-hat with serrated brim and a red band.

He alighted deliberately, lifted from the saddle a worn and sunken-sided carpet bag which his grandfather had carried, tied his mule, and finally faced the paralyzed group on the porch. An uneasy look lurked in his china-blue eyes.

"It's all right, boys," he began, unsteadily. "I reckon you-all air a little surprised to see me in dress-up, funeral togs. You kinder look it. But 'taint no funeral. It's just the opposite of a funeral." He swiftly licked his dry lips with his tongue. "Boys, I'm—I'm a-goin' to git married."

"Married!" exploded his listeners as one man.

Buck grinned—for the first time in the recollection of Buffalo Horn. It was a rigid, mechanical grin, like the opening of a camera shutter.

"Yes, married," he repeated. "Come on over to Ike's and I'll tell you all about it."

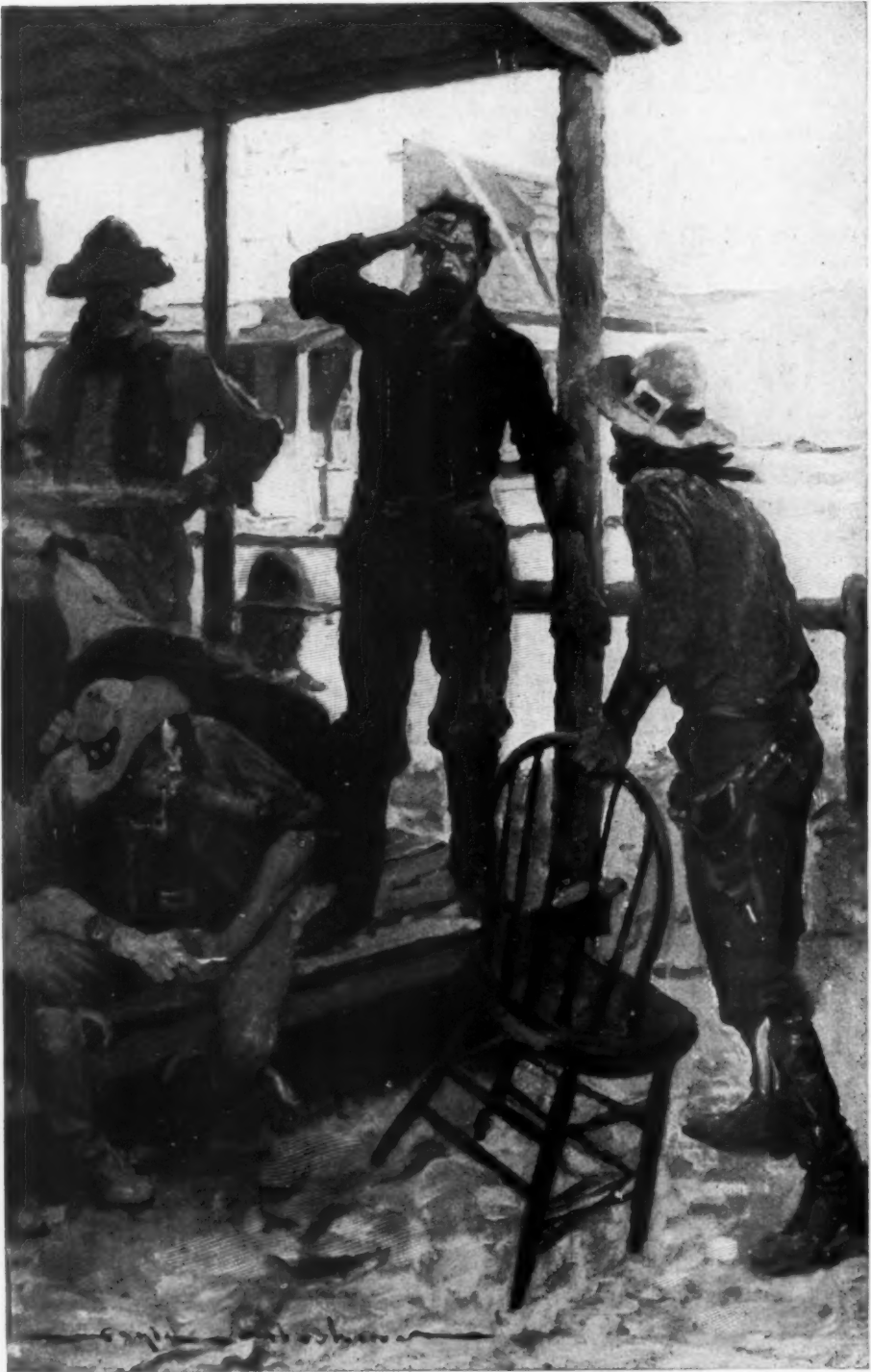
When they were seated at a table in Ike's place, with a varied assortment of wet goods before them, he began:

"Jake, mebbe you remember the first piece of mail I ever got hyer. It was about two years ago, after I'd been hyer about three years."

"Certainly do," answered Jake Hathaway, the postmaster. "It was a newspaper. When I asked you to read out the news to the boys you said you didn't have your specs along."



He rode over to the Pea Green Hotel.



"Boys," said Buck, huskily, "I've struck it rich."

Buck flushed. "I didn't have 'em along—ner at home, neither. Truth is, I hadn't done no readin', outside o' signs, fer some time, and I was kinder scairt to tackle that small print off-hand in public. But it come easy enough after I got the hang of it. Readin' is like swimmin'. Once you've been learnt it—"

"One minute," interrupted Dick Sharples, lifting his glass. "Wet your whistle, Buck, and start right. Here's to your lady—long may she wave!"

The toast was drunk heartily, after which Fleehearty, readjusting a celluloid cuff that had slipped out of his short coat-sleeve, continued:

"I'd writ back to my old home in Coolville, Kentucky, fer that paper. I hadn't heerd a word from the old place since mother died, and somehow I was a-hankerin' fer a little news. Well, I read every word in that paper. It took me weeks, 'cause I only read nights and Sundays, though sometimes I was powerful tempted to lay off work. There was all kinds of things in it—poretry, and recipes fer cakes, and the doin's of kings and queens across the water, and a piece about two fellers in Dayton, Ohio, that had invented a flyin'-machine. I knowed *that* was a danged lie, of course. Still, it was entertainin', the way it was writ up—sunthin like Robinson Crusoe. You've all heerd of him, of course."

"You mean that pop-eyed galoot over at Drybone what run a faro-bank?" demanded Bill Arp.

"No, no," interposed Ladyfinger. "He means a feller in a story. I've read it myself. Proceed, Buck."

"You don't call it no story, do you, Lady?" inquired Buck, anxiously. "Read like Gospel truth to me."

"Well, some say it's true, some say it aint. Critics are divided. It's probably half and half. Howsomever, go on."

"But what I took most stock in," continued Buck, "was the doin's of the Coolville people—people I used to know—dyin' or gittin' married or havin' a baby or movin' away or startin' in business or buildin' a new house. When I left thar, fifteen years ago, I had the feelin'—can't explain it exactly—that the old town would soon dry up and blow away. Seemed about dead. But

things air runnin' along about the same as ever. Some improvements, too—water-works and electric lights.

"Yet I liked the advertisements about as well as anything. Type was big and easy readin'. I read 'em all, as I say; but there was one that struck me in pertikler. It said the Capple sisters, Ariadne and Emmy, had started a millinery store in the old Orchard block, acrost from the post-office. Now once I went to what they called a photygraft sociable in the Methodist church. The girls all put their photygrafts in a pile, tied up in paper so you couldn't tell one from t'other. Each boy paid a quarter and drewed a photygraft out, and the girl he drewed he took to supper and lollybanged around with, in a gin'ral way, the rest of the evenin'.

"I drewed Ariadne Capple. I scurcely knowed her, fer we folks—mother and me and brother Harvey—lived three miles out in the country, and so I never mixed much with the town girls. I was some nervous, you kin bet, and when I walked up to her and asked fer the pleasure of takin' her out to supper, I sweat like a hay-hand. Of course, I didn't really take her *out*, fer the tables was set right thar in the basement where we had the sociable. But I put it that way because that was the way it was in a book mother bought from a tin-peddler called 'The Guide to Parlor Etiquette, or Good Manners Made Easy,' which I'd learnt by heart that winter. Still, as I say, I sweat some. In them days I was what you might call timid."

He paused and smiled a second time, until Sharples, raising his glass with a "Hyer's to the lady agin!" broke the spell.

"To Mrs. Buck Fleehearty to be!" amended Ladyfinger, doffing his silk tile—the only silk tile in active use, so far as known, within a radius of four hundred miles.

"Denton, Lady—Mrs. Denton Fleehearty," corrected Buck, gently. "Ariadne knows me only as Denton, and Buck, moreover, air a title which I should hesitate to apply to a lady of the first water. But drink hearty!"

"Boys," he pursued, "I've kept that photygraft to this day. I've got it in that



cyarpethbag yander right now. I'll show it to you-all purty soon. I've looked at it a good many times in all these years; not sentimental-like, fer you fellers know I aint that kind, but jist fer the sake of the good old days when I war twenty-two. But when I seen that advertisement and learnt that Ariadne was still single, I wondered if she wouldn't like a letter from me, remindin' her of that sociable and lettin' her know that I was still alive and prosperin', in a way.

"So I up and writ her. Told her all about myself and this place. Told her all about you boys, too—in a gin'ral way, leavin' out certain pertiklers. Danged if she didn't write back. Then I writ agin, and she writ back agin. Finally, when I wasn't writin' to her I was thinkin' about her, especially when cookin' vittles or washin' clothes. A man's a pore makeshift over a stove or a tub, and presently it got so that every time I passed Bill Heck's shanty, and seen that white wash out on the line, and that little skeesicks of their'n playin' on them old heaps of pay-dirt, it give me the blues.

"I felt like a woodchuck blocked out of his hole on a frosty night. So one day, when I was pertikler blue, I asked Ariadne if she keered to marry me, takin' me by and large, up one side and down t'other—no harm done if she didn't, but hopin' she would—sunthin like that—easy and offhand, you know. Still, I wasn't easy by no means, and my hand shuck so I could hardly glue the stamp on the envellyup."

He paused solemnly, filled the glasses around, gazed pathetically into his auditors' eyes, nodded a mute toast through sudden tears, and gulped his liquor.

"She tuck me, boys. In the words of the Sammist, 'Better late than never,' says she. And now I'm a-goin' after her." His voice shook. "She'll miss the birds and the grass and the first spring flowers of old Kentucky, out hyer in this vestibule to hell. I want you to be good to her, boys, kind-like and sociable, inside o' proper bounds, of course. Don't fail me, boys, fer if there was ever a wingless angel on this hyer pore, low-down, God-forsaken footstool—"

"Brace up, brace up, Buck!" com-

manded Hathaway. "You aint had half a dozen drinks yet. Darn a cryin' drunk, anyhow. Haul out that pitcher you spoke of and let's see the cut of your lady's jib. Mebbe you got good reason fer cryin'."

Buck opened his bag. The first dive brought forth a bottle of hair-tonic, the second a pair of red woolen wrist-bands, the third the photograph.

It passed slowly and lingeringly from hand to hand, greeted by admiring eyes and soft, profane ejaculations. For Ariadne was a beauty, with a wealth of fluffy hair, a Cupid's bow of a mouth, a delicious dimple in her chin, and a smooth, round neck that any man would delight to hang with chains of gold. In short, she was a woman who matched Buck Fleehearty as a wax doll matches a grizzly bear.

Ike, leaning over the bar, exclaimed: "When that leddy comes to Buffalo Horn, we'll git on the map!" A moment later he came forward with a quart bottle of "Old Bluegrass Pride" in his hands. "Weddin' gift," said he, "and don't waste it by pourin' it down the animated rat-holes around this table. Keep it till you cross the Missisip' and begin to git cold feet."

The precedent established, Banty Chance slipped a huge ring from his finger, the cameo of which represented a lady wearing a minimum of drapery. "Attach that to one of your lunch-hooks, Buck," said he.

Sharples drew from his cravat a stick-pin mounted with a nugget the size of a robin's egg. Hathaway, after a short absence, returned with two pound slabs of chewing-tobacco. Ladyfinger Offut, who had been playing in hard luck of late, hesitated a moment and then removed his top hat.

"Take it, Buck," said he, "and I'll worry along with that hay stewpan of yours until I order my fall duds from Phoenix. It's a trifling gift, but nothing will so quickly give you standing in the effete East as correct attire. It's a little small, I perceive," he added, as Flee-earty jammed the hat down until the cylindrical crown bulged at the base, "but in the trans-Mississippi country you will discover that it is not the style

for one to anchor his headpiece to his ears. While on the subject, a hot flat-iron wouldn't hurt that undertaker's outfit of yours. Your lady-love will expect a man with a million to look some spruce."

"She don't know I got a million," answered Buck. "She thinks I'm still a-grubbin' in that old claim, and I aint goin' to tell her dif'rent till after the ceremony. Then I'm goin' to hand her a check fer a hundred thousand dollars and say, keerless-like, 'Weddin' gift, Ary!' Give her and the guests some sensation, wont it?"

To Buck Fleehearty the long journey East was a phantasmagoria. The deserts of Arizona and New Mexico, the battlemented, canyon-scarred Rockies, the plains of Kansas, the prairies of southern Illinois and Indiana, the bustle, din and clangor of the railroad stations at Kansas City, St. Louis and Cincinnati, the turbid Father of Waters, the limpid Ohio—all these passed before him like a moving picture.

It was not a diverting or pleasing picture to him, however. Always a shrinking soul, the solitary and illimitable expanses of the West, in which he had spent the last decade and a half, had made him draw still further within himself. In the comparatively thickly settled country back East, the struggle for existence looked cruel. The barking of cabbies at the stations, the operatives swarming in or out of factories, the multitudinous sights and sounds of urban life, played upon his nerves. He had really gone West to escape just such things. Hence, with every degree of latitude his heart sank a degree.

He rode in a day-coach, for he would have wrestled unarmed with a mountain lion rather than penetrate the *terra incognita* of a Pullman. Hence he had to change cars a number of times, in doing which he scuttled from one to the other like a rabbit. In spite of the thousand dollars in his money-belt, he lived largely on peanuts, apples and bananas, purchased from the train-boy. He dared not venture as far as a lunch-room from fear of being left; and the white-capped darky announcing breakfast, lunch or

dinner in the dining-car was as remote and impersonal to him as an angel proclaiming the blessings of Heaven.

But it was not until he had crossed the Ohio at Cincinnati that a real terror settled about his heart like Arctic cold. Then the audacity, the foolhardiness of his undertaking burst upon him like a clap of thunder. A human mole, a burrower in the earth, a man who used to cross the street to avoid meeting a bevy of girls, a man who had never kissed a woman—such was he who had invaded this land of luxury to claim a bride!

That he was a millionaire and that millionaires have power, never crossed his mind. His fortune was too new; it was a thing apart from his consciousness, a weapon which he had not yet learned to use. But beneath his sensitive surface was a core of steel, and not once did he entertain the thought of turning back. His was the stuff of which martyrs are made.

An hour out of Lexington the names of the stations began to have a familiar sound. Then came Cherry Valley, where an aunt of his lived, or had lived once. Emerald Grove he remembered as a place where his father had bought a second-hand threshing machine. As the train twinkled through the hamlet of Barrett's, to which point he had more than once hauled a load of hogs, his pulse quickened. Finally, in an incredibly short interval, as he remembered the distance, the brakeman sang out nasally: "Coolville! Cool-v-i-l-l-e! C-o-o-l-ville!"

An iron band gripped Buck's chest. But manfully he arose, oblivious of the smiles at his eccentric garb, and hastened down the aisle, all but upsetting an old lady with a bandbox in one hand and a bird-cage in the other. In his excitement he sprang off the wrong side of the train, and, turning his ankle on a cinder, fell to his knees, upon which his top hat sprang from his head like a coiled spring. Recovering it, he jammed it on again with both hands, and peeped fearfully under the train at the platform on the other side.

There stood Ariadne sure enough—older, undeniably older, yet almost as pretty as ever. By her side was a lean,

sharp-visaged woman in the early forties whom he decided must be Ariadne's sister Emmy. Yet after he had climbed between the cars and reached the platform it was Emmy, oddly enough, who glimpsed him first and rushed forward, while Ariadne was waving her hand at

to exercise a special watch over fools saved him from the tragic blunder by inspiring the young woman to take the words out of his mouth.

"Yes, I'm Ariadne Capple, and it wouldn't have been surprisin' if you had forgotten me. I've changed, I reckon, the same as you. There's sister Em. You must remember her, too. Em! Oh, Emmy. Here's Mr. Fleehearty now!"

For one moment, one ghastly, soul-sickening moment, train, station, people, street and trees executed a fantastic,



"Boys," he said, "I've kept that photygraft to this day."

a spick-and-span young man just boarding the coach ahead.

"Why, Denton Fleehearty!" exclaimed Miss Capple. "I don't believe you know me!"

"Yes, yes, I do," stammered Buck. "You're Ariadne Cap—"

He intended to say "You're Ariadne Capple's sister Emmy." But the kind Providence who is popularly supposed

whirling dance before Buck's eyes, like a company of imps loosed from their nether abode. He had confused the sister's names! Ariadne was Emmy, Emmy was Ariadne; and it was Emmy's, not Ariadne's, picture which he had treasured all these years!

He glanced wildly about him, like a

rat cornered by a terrier; but before he could decide whether to fly up or down the platform, or dive under the train, Emma Capple, with her fluffy hair and dimpled chin, was upon him.

"Pleased to meet you, Mr. Fleehearty," said she, with a simper. "I've heard a lot of you through Ary here. Feel almost as if I knew you. Glad to welcome you back to Coolville. But two's a company, three's a crowd in this case, I guess," she added, archly. "So, if you'll excuse me, I'll leave you in Ary's hands while I do a little marketing. That's usually Ary's job, but we've let her off to-day."

She tripped briskly away. Buck watched her as a marooned sailor might watch a receding sail. Then Ariadne slipped her thin hand within his arm, though it was broad daylight, and said, with a little flutter: "This way—Denton."

Buck had the curious feeling of a man marching in his own funeral procession. Then suddenly, without warning, he emitted a laugh, the first in seven years, and one that sounded like the ripping up of a board sidewalk.

Ariadne glanced up inquiringly.

"I was laughin' to think how happy a feller in my boots ought to be," said he.

"Or a woman in mine," she answered, coyly. "Isn't it strange, this thing we call life? How human destinies drift about like motes in the air, far, far apart, until suddenly a current which comes from we know not where brings them together!"

"Quite so," observed Buck, recklessly, but trying to picture the faces of the Buffalo Horn boys as he led this spare and demure hen partridge into camp, instead of the robust beauty whose picture he had so proudly displayed. In his mind he could hear a roar like that of an infant tornado, the demoniac merriment of Ladyfinger Offut and his pals. For marry her he would have to, it looked. Still, there was a never-say-die strain in his nature, and he feverishly began to canvass the possible avenues of escape.

While he was thus engaged, Ariadne halted him in front of a vacant little

store-building whose windows were littered with several broken hat-stands and scraps of pink crêpe-paper.

"This was our millinery shop," she explained. "We closed it about four months ago. Emmy never liked the business, and she had a chance to go into Judge Campbell's law-office—she's a stenographer, you know. I suppose I could have run it alone a little longer; but the season was about over, and between taking care of mother and—and getting my clothes ready, I had almost more than I could do. Yet I closed out with fear and trembling. Father left us nothing, and the shop was our only support. You lived so far away. We hadn't seen each other for so long. We never knew each other very well. All our courtship had been by letter, and—so many unforeseen things could have happened. I can scarcely realize now that you're here."

Her voice broke as she blinked back the tears. Buck's contemplated avenues of escape suddenly contracted to the size of knotholes. With each friend of Ariadne's to whom he was introduced on the way home they grew still smaller, for these friends plainly looked upon him as Ariadne's *fiancé*.

When they reached the Capple cottage, out on the edge of the village, where property was cheapest, Buck discovered with a shock that old Mrs. Capple was blind. She asked him to kneel beside her cushioned rocker, whereupon she passed her hands over his face.

"I don't believe I ever knew you, Mr. Fleehearty," said she, sweetly. "But I knew your father and your mother and other Fleehearties as well, and I never heard anything but good of any of them."

Buck flushed, though under his coat of coal-dust no sign showed. Then Ariadne led him to a cosy little room furnished with a spotless bed, a pitcher of soft water, soap and towels. The first water off his face and hands was like ink, the second not much better, the third still unsatisfactory; and he finally abandoned the hopeless task of sluicing all the carboniferous deposit out of his jungly seven days' growth of beard, though he was mortally ashamed of the



spots he left upon the snowy towel.

Emmy did not arrive for an hour. Buck noted the contrast between her broad-brimmed, plumed hat and Ariadne's staid little bonnet; her trim, tight-fitting gown, and the clusters of rings on her fingers. After depositing her bundles in the kitchen, she sat down to a piano in the front room and banged away at some popular songs. Meanwhile Ariadne set the supper table, drew a bucket of well water, carried in an armload of stove wood, cooked and served the meal, led her mother into the dining-room when all was ready, and murmured a simple blessing over the food.

In the short space of that hour there was born to Buck Fleeheartly the realization that the woman whom he had loved for a year or more was purely a creature of his imagination, far removed from the shallow, yellow-haired, vain shirk whose name was Emma Capple. But this made him none the more willing to marry Ariadne, admirable character though she seemed to be.

After supper Emma announced her intention of going to a moving-picture show with a girl friend. Ariadne insisted on Buck's going along while she remained home with her mother. Buck accompanied Emma and her friend as far as the door of the theatre; then, stung to the quick by their covert merriment, of which he fancied himself the source, he abruptly excused himself.

He first repaired to a barber shop, where he indulged in a shave, haircut, shampoo, and hot bath. Next he hunted up a clothing store. Five days on the road had given him some hints on dress, and he bought a dozen linen collars, six shirts, six suits of underwear, a handful of neckties, a hat, two suits of clothes, and a pair of shoes. After sloughing off his old garments in the rear of the store and kicking them into the alley, he created a sensation by tendering a hundred-dollar bill in payment of his purchases. Already the spirit of the East was invading him; his million in the bank out West was nudging his elbow; and while the clerk scurried up and down the street getting opinions on the genuineness of the bill, Buck nonchalantly smoked a cigar.

Yet his brain was busy with his dilemma. To confess the truth to Ariadne was impossible; it was too brutal; he would have burned at the stake first. On the other hand, to drop out of the window that night and flee like a thief, as he had at first thought of doing, was equally impossible to a man of honor. And all the time the vacant little millinery shop haunted him like an unburied corpse.

The next day he tried a plan at which his honest nature balked, but which seemed less dishonest than marrying a woman whom he did not love. He and Ariadne were sitting at the time on a bench under an apple tree in the yard, with the lush grass under their feet and the breath of honeysuckle floating to their nostrils.

"Ariadne," he began, with inward quakes, "I been a little troubled in my mind since comin' hyer. I been thinkin' that mebbe I didn't make it right plain to you just what kind of a country the West air, more especially in pertikler Buffalo Horn."

"You've written me pages about it, Denton," said she.

"It's quite diff'rent from this country—more diff'rent than I supposed till I come back hyer. The Horn's a hundred and fifty miles from a railroad. There air twelve cabins, a cross between a hotel and a boardin'-house called the Pea Green—which is a term, I might explain, borrowed from the roulette table—and Ike's place, which is a saloon."

"I wondered what Pea Green meant, when you wrote me about it. I thought maybe it was a shade of paint, like ribbon."

"The population consists of twenty white men, six greasers, four half-breed Injuns, a Chinaman, and one woman. She was a cook in the Pea Green till Bill Heck married her. Nice enough woman, too, but not what you would call cultured. There's another point, too, I ought to have spoke of. There air no trees, no grass, no flowers, and no water except what's brought down from the mountains in a flume. In the summer the thermometer runs as high as a hundred and twenty."

"In the shade?" exclaimed Ariadne.



"There aint no shade. Agin, we git mail every two weeks. I live eight miles out from the camp, and some people might call it lonesome. We set our tables mostly with evaporated milk and canned goods."

He paused from lack of further facts. Ariadne finished a buttonhole before answering.

"I think I have a pretty good idea of the country," she then said. "I read a novel out of the public library about a place like Buffalo Horn. It was right after you—you asked me to marry you. That's the reason I read the book. I thought it all out. Such a country will be a great change for me, but I guess it don't make much difference to a woman where she lives as long as she's with the man she loves."

Buck rallied his forces again. "I've been afeerd, too, you might miss the sassiety here. You have a lot of goin's on here. Out West there's really nothin' to do but drink; and of course no lady does that, not even Bill Heck's wife. Another point, too, has come to my mind. I writ you that I was makin' about ten dollars a day. That seems like some money here, probably, but out there it's nothin', with calico at twenty-five cents a yard, corn and tomatoes at fifty cents a can, and everything else to correspond. It aint much more than a ditch-digger would make hyer in the East."

"Your frankness is most creditable, Denton," answered Ariadne. "It assures me you will never deceive me. I shall miss the flowers and the grass; my women friends, too. But I'll have something I haven't got here—something many times better—the love of a true man. As long as I am sure of your love, Denton, I can be happy anywhere."

Buck, with a sinking heart, suspended his attack temporarily. Indeed, several days passed without his having mapped out any new line of assault. Meanwhile, he lived up to his false position. He took the girls alternately to the moving picture show. He bought them candy, soda water, flowers, books, gloves, silk stockings, until Ariadne gently hinted that he must not let his generosity run away with his purse.

One day he hired Coolville's only pub-

lic carriage and took the whole family out riding. After driving about the village half an hour he turned into the road leading to his old home, now in alien hands. He had intended to stop; he yearned to see once more the bed of lobelia and sweet alyssum under his mother's bedroom window; to taste the water from the old well; to lay his hands upon the meadow stone fence, every yard of which used to house a chipmunk. But a tousle-headed slattern hanging out clothes in the yard and a yapping cur which bounded through the gateless, tumble-down fence, spoiled his appetite for the visit, and he drove past. Ariadne murmured sympathetically: "It's no longer home, is it?"

At Old Bethel church he left the carriage and walked back to the graveyard some distance from the road on a knoll planted with tapering firs. Hunting up the graves of his parents—he had never seen his mother's before—he bent over them. The midsummer buzz of insects in the adjoining field, the distant cooing of a dove, became a threnody on the fleetness of life. Only the other day his mother was romping with him in the hay-mow like a girl; and this was her grave, with a stone marked "*Aetat 67.*" He felt like throwing himself on the mat of cool periwinkle, starred with blue flowers, not to rise again.

Something of this feeling doubtless still lingered upon his face when he returned to the carriage, for Ariadne delicately averted her eyes. Emmy smothered a yawn.

"I remember the day your mother was buried," said Ariadne, after a little, in a low voice. "I didn't attend the funeral, but our pastor conducted it—Old Bethel being closed—and Mrs. Sales sang. It was almost her first appearance after her baby's birth. She caught cold and died in two weeks. It fairly stunned the town. She was Judge Campbell's only daughter, and Charlie Sales has never been the same since."

The next day, as Buck was prowling about the village, nosing out half-forgotten spots, he was accosted by old Judge Campbell.

"They tell me you are Denton Fleehearty. I knew your father and mother



"There air no trees, no grass, no water, except what's brought down from the mountains in a flume. In the summer the thermometer runs as high as a hundred and twenty."

"In the shade?" exclaimed Ariadne. "There aint no shade," answered Buck.

well. I shall never forget your mother. My daughter sang at her funeral." He gravely related the incident, as Ariadne had. "But such is life. We must think of the living, not the dead. I wish you happiness, young man, and I can assure you, from an acquaintanceship of nearly forty years, that a truer, nobler woman than Ariadne Capple never graced this footstool."

Buck slunk along like a sheep-killing dog as he recalled his stratagem for shaking off the affectionate grasp of this same true and noble woman. He was beginning to suspect that she was worthy of the Judge's tribute. Her unfailing solicitude for the blind mother, her skillful direction of the cottage's domestic affairs, were eliciting his admiration more and more. In fact, it had even occurred to him that she might make him a good wife.

As a result, he drew no more grisly pictures of the West. On the contrary, he tried to tone down those he had drawn. But an evening or two later Ariadne herself, to his surprise, returned to the subject.

"Denton, I've been thinking of our talk the other day. It was kind and generous of you to bring the matter up, and that's my only excuse for what I'm about to say now. That novel I spoke of probably showed only the romance of the West; you have seen its realities. If I was to get homesick and lonesome, our marriage would be a misfortune to both of us. My word is passed, and I'll stick to it if it's for your good. But if you fear that I would be lonesome and homesick, it would be better for us to just—to just remain friends."

A week before, these words would have caused Buck—in imagination—to leap into the air and click his heels together. But now, as her needle quivered and her lashes darkened, he felt almost as dashed as when he discovered that Emmy was Ariadne, and Ariadne Emmy.

"I said you *might*," he answered, meekly. "I never really thought you would. I was kinder tired that day from my trip, and I probably laid it on a little thick. 'Taint all bad out West. We got mountains and chaparral and horned toads and rattlers—dead oodles of rattlers. Of

course, they aint things you keer to make pets of, but they add interest to a walk, ef it's only to scurry out o' their way."

She stitched silently for an interval. "It would be a great change. While it was indefinite, I had no doubts of myself, but now that it's at hand I sort of shrink from it. I see that you were right."

Buck's mind was not a high-power machine, but during the next two minutes it developed a speed far above its rating.

"'Taint to be assumed, Ary, that we'll always live in Buffalo Horn. There air other and nicer places out West, and if I should strike it rich some time, we could live where we pleased—or even come back East. And 'taint so unlikely that I will strike it. Lots of others have. 'Tween you and me, the last ore I took out looked mighty promisin'."

"I don't care about your striking it rich, Denton. I'm used to being poor. I wouldn't know what to do with money—unless it was to provide a few more comforts for mother. She's had most to do with my change of mind. Years ago I laid all thoughts of marriage aside on account of her. But when your proposal come, she made me believe that she could get along nicely without me. Yet she can't last many years more. If I went West I might never see her alive again. Then Emmy hasn't the knack of looking after her that I have."

"We'll take your mother along," declared Buck, suddenly.

Ariadne gave him a peculiarly searching look, then dropped her eyes.

"That's good of you; but it's more than you bargained for. I think we'd better let our plans drop. It wont be so very embarrassing for me. If you go away without me, people will gossip awhile, and then it will die out."

"I don't want to go away without you, Ary," protested Buck loudly, doing his best to rake out of her mind's soil the damnable thistles he had sown. "I'll take half of this hyer town along if it will keep you happy."

Again she gave him that strange, searching look.

"Denton, you puzzle me. Let us be quite frank. In your very first letter you spoke of drawing my photograph once at a church sociable. I felt that you

were mistaken, but I never gave the matter another thought until the day you stepped off the train. Then I saw that you scarcely recognized me, but were all eyes for Emmy. Still I was blind to the truth, and never dreamed that you might have confused her and me. Not even the dismal pictures you drew the next day of the West aroused my suspicion. But this morning, Denton, when I was sweeping your room, I knocked your carpet-bag off the chair and—Emmy's photograph fell out."

Buck reeled like a polled ox. Ariadne sobbed.

"Oh, Denton, I'm so sorry, so sorry for you. You have been so magnanimous, so heroic, in sparing me the truth. But I thank God that you were not allowed, through a false sense of honor, to make the supreme sacrifice of marrying a woman you do not love."

"I *do* love you!" he shouted, leaping to his feet. "I did git the names mixed, but I'm glad of it. Emmy wouldn't suit me. You're wuth ten Emmies, yes, a hundred. I've saw who runs this house, who makes it a fitten place to be called home, who takes keer of mother. You bet I have. The gal fer me is the gal that loves her mother. Kiss me, Ary, and forgive all that hogwash I give you the other day about the West."

She did kiss him, gently, daintily, as was her way in all things.

"How weak is our faith!" she murmured. "This morning I thought I should never be happy again."

At Buck's request, practically the whole village was invited to the wedding. Everybody came, too, for expectation was on tiptoe. Nor was it disappointed. It was the first "blow-out" of Buck's life, and he made it memorable.

Half a dray-load of costly flowers, ordered from Lexington, rendered the cottage fairly faint with perfume. A twenty-five-piece band from the same city blared on the lawn. Two hundred Japanese lanterns twinkled in the dark. The pair of old apple trees which flanked the front door sagged under a fruitage of colored incandescent lamps. The refreshments were of a character which the next issue of the *Enterprise*, discarding for

once in its life the word "dainty" in this connection, described as "elegant, superb, and unprecedented in the annals of Coolville." Every guest was presented with the souvenir spoon with which he ate his ice cream.

It was all nearly as much of a surprise to the bride as to the guests, and the cost fairly frightened her. But it was not until the next morning, when Buck rather mysteriously invited her to take a walk, that he fully revealed his Napoleonic grandeur to her.

Everybody in Coolville who took a walk always rounded up at the village's only show-place—the Abercrombie Tidd home, whose park-like grounds occupied a whole block. As they neared the place, Ariadne explained that it had been closed ever since old Abercrombie's death, two years before; and added that the heirs were talking of cutting it up into lots.

"It would be a shame to spoil a purty place like that," observed Buck. "How'd you like to live thar?"

"How would I like to live in Paradise!" exclaimed Ariadne, gaily, for she was very happy.

Buck fumbled in his pocket. "It's your'n, then. Thar's the deed fer it."

He was not prepared for the pallor which overspread her face.

"Why—why, Denton, what do you mean?" she asked faintly.

"I mean, fer one thing, that we're goin' to live East, in God's country. I've served my time in the West, and I know you'll be happier hyer. I bought this place three days ago. It's my weddin' gift to you. I was goin' to give you a check fer a hundred thousand dollars, but I decided this would suit you better. Looks more substantial than a little piece of paper. I bought our old farm, too, the same day. I'll play with that, and you can play with this."

She stared at him as if doubting his sanity.

"But the money!" she gasped. "Where did you get it all?"

"Oh, I fergot to tell you, Ary, that I struck it rich about three months ago," said he, with a smile on his face which the Buffalo Horn boys, could they have seen it, would have regarded as purely an optical illusion.



# The Magnate of Marysburg

Hudson and Jones take a flier  
in the insurance business

—by—  
THORNTON CHAMBERS

Author of "Gulla-Gulla—the Occult," etc.



**I**CAN see money sticking out all over this town, but I will be jiggered if I can get my hands on it," grumbled Henry Hicks Hudson, the promoter of legitimate enterprises, as he gazed upon the woe-begone visage of Will U. C. Jones, his partner.

"We aren't in right, that is what is the matter," sighed Jones, with contempt. "And by this time all my earthly assets are forty-five cents, a wife who is writing special delivery letters for money, and a Chinese laundry ticket. How strong are you, Hudson?"

Hudson sniffed the air audibly and evidently was not in a mood for an interview on his financial status. They sauntered along the sidewalk of one of the outlying streets of Marysburg, a small and very conservative town.

"Just watch me," resumed Hudson. "I know that we have not sold a single share of our highly decorated stock, but I feel it in my bones that we will con-

nect with somebody's bank-roll or get pinched. I realize that our wives are in Pittsburgh without a cent, and I am also dead certain that the hotel keeper here has been nosing around in our valise to see if we are worth trusting. The only thing that has kept him from asking for money is my stove-pipe hat-box and the telegram which I sent myself about the 'dividends' and the 'rents from my property.' You notice how I left it accidentally on purpose by my breakfast plate."

"Don't you think you made it a little too strong?" asked Jones.

"Not at all, not with a silk hat. The leather hat-box is full of soiled linen, but locked."

With bundles of the literature of the National Holding Corporation concealed in their hip pockets, they kept on walking, until they passed the office of the Marysburg *Bugle*, when Hudson suddenly exclaimed:

"Great Scott, Jones, I nearly over-



looked the one best bet. The other day the editor of this punk paper gave me a tip. He told me to get on the sunny side of the bell wether here, a clever German, Max Nebel. The four banks here are slopping over with money and the population is like a flock of sheep. If we can land the Teutonic gent they will all follow. If we don't, it will be the cinder path between the rails for us to the next town. Shall we take the last desperate chance?"

"You bet; there is always some man in every town who is the key and combination to everything."

"I was told he lived in the last house of this very street," said Hudson, glancing at the street sign. "Let us try him."

When nothing but a vista of rural scenery confronted them, Jones said, pointing to a large house at their left:

"Here is the last house: pretty nice place."

A woman answered their ring.

"Is Mr. Nebel in?" asked Hudson.

"Next place south," snapped the woman, and banged the door.

They went back to the sidewalk and scanned the scenery. They saw nothing but a small, unpainted shanty, which they had taken for a chicken house. On a small board was scrawled:

"MAX NEBEL, REAL ESTATE, INSURANCE, LOANS."

A bicycle of the "ice wagon" pattern stood leaning sadly against the wall of the ramshackle place as if it were doing its best to save the establishment from immediate collapse.

As they entered, they found a very small man in an old cane chair with his feet on the table. Although the sun shone brightly, a kerosene lamp with a broken chimney was burning with a generous outpouring of smoke. The man was leaning back on the hind legs of the chair, which, on close inspection, proved to be a combination of various legs from different chairs, reinforced with twine and rusty wire.

Mr. Nebel wore a suit which would not have brought fifteen cents at a rummage sale. He had on a straw hat, boy's

size, with a broken crown, through which a tuft of hair peeked out in a rather inquisitive manner. His large feet reposed in "congress" shoes, with square toes and with insertions of elastic cloth, which had become accordion pleated with age. Pretending not to notice the two men, Nebel perused a patent medicine almanac and made futile attempts to elicit smoke from a broken stogie, half Fletcherized.

"My name is Hudson," began Hudson.

"Not a bad name," said Nebel without moving. "Mine is Nebel. It means 'fog' in German. Have you a match?"

Finding no matches, Hudson suggested that Nebel might get a light from the lamp. Nebel laughed with the noise of a dry hinge and lighted his stogie. Then he blew out the lamp, threw the almanac deftly on a shelf and turned around slightly.

"Sit down, gents," he said. But as there was nothing to sit on, the callers simply leaned against the shaky walls.

"Well, what can I do for you?" asked Nebel with a business smile.

"A-hem, we will explain the nature of our business presently," replied Hudson; "but we will have to ask you first of all to take us up to the First National Bank and have Mr. Hartley, the cashier, introduce you to us."

"Wha-a-t?"

"I mean just what I say, Mr. Nebel. My partner here, Mr. Jones, and I, are merely acting upon instructions from the board of directors and you must be formally introduced to us, before we can speak."

"The board of directors of what?"

"You will find that out, sir, as soon as you are properly introduced to Mr. Jones and myself. You don't suppose we go around the country and make presents of thousands of dollars to people we don't know, do you?"

Nebel's face underwent a change; his little, beady eyes twinkled. He made a desperately rapid but thorough inspection of the two visitors and arose.

"I don't know what for monkey business you are up to, but just for fun, I'll go with you," he wheezed. "I am past

sixty but this is the richest case what I ever struck, yet. Me to be in-tro-dooed, hey?"

Hudson and Jones walked up the street, one on each side of Nebel. The little German pulled nervously at his mutton chop whiskers and said nothing. At the First National Bank the cashier gave his hair a quick touch with a pocket comb and received Nebel with much deference.

"Say, Hartley, tell those here gents whether I am a horsethief, burglar or what," demanded Nebel. "They want me to be properly introduced to them. Can you beat that?"

"A-hem, um, all I can say, gentlemen, is that Mr. Nebel is the president and the principal stockholder of this institution, and enjoys a similar position in two of the other three banks here," said the cashier. "He is also president of the street-car company, the gas and water company, the Young Men's Christian Association, the Marysburg Light and Power Company, owner of almost every good business block in town and—"

"That'll be quite sufficient," declared Hudson, gravely. "I thank you. We will be glad to meet Mr. Nebel."

Jones could hardly keep a straight face as the bank cashier went through a stiff formality of introducing to them the richest man in the county. As Hartley concluded the ceremony and they had shaken hands all around he remarked:

"Mr. Hudson has an account here, I believe, or is going to open one. He was in here the other day and mentioned something about it."

"Oh, I see," said Nebel. "Now, gentlemen, what is your business?"

"We had better go back to your office," suggested Hudson, "as this is strictly private business."

"Oh, well, start up the procession," smiled Nebel. "I am going to see this out if it takes all summer."

They started on the long walk back to Nebel's little shanty. This time Hudson selected the main street and took good care to appear to be on very intimate terms with Nebel every time they passed a prosperous looking person or one of the stores. Jones' forty-five cents enabled them to treat Mr. Nebel, who partook of nothing stronger than ginger-ale, as they dropped into the bar rooms of the two hotels.

"Have you a few sheets of paper, Mr. Nebel? I will have to ask you some questions," said Hudson, when they were again at Nebel's office.

The German began trembling with an emotion he could not define. It was either impatience or indignation. Never before had anyone dared to put him on the rack. He was now consenting to run the gantlet of questions by two strangers—he, the president of everything worth while and vice president of almost everything else. Yet he was determined to see it all out. He threw a huge tablet of legal size paper on the table and asked: "Is that enough?"

"Well, yes, if I write closely," replied Hudson, coolly, as he removed his coat and sharpened both ends of a lead pencil.

Nebel sat smoking hard.

"What is your full name, sir?" began Hudson.

"Now, look here, Mr. Hudson; I will go through this with the understanding that I am no sucker, no fool, just game."

"So sucker, no fool, hm, just game," wrote Hudson and read it over from his alleged short hand notes. "Very well, Mr. Nebel, you take this matter lightly now, but it is serious business, as far as we are concerned."

"That may be, but you use the darnedest methods I ever saw," replied Nebel.

"Well, fire away; my name is Maximilian Sebastian Nebel."

"Born?"

"Yes, when very young," snapped the little German, getting more and more angry. But he answered the questions



as Hudson went into all imaginable details. Jones chewed his fingers to keep from laughing. After making several sheets of bogus shorthand notes, Hudson asked:

"Were you ever indicted, Nebel?"

Nebel's patience was gone. His thin side whiskers bristled, and Jones, who had been standing up during the inquisition, almost caved in.

"You go to the devil," gasped Nebel. "Get out of town. Why, of all the nervy, miserable fellows I ever saw, you are the limit."

"Beg pardon, but it is one of the regular questions," explained Hudson, suavely. He gave Jones a sly wink.

"Very well," gasped Nebel. "For heaven's sake come to the point. Is it mining stocks or wave motors? Spring it, spring it."

Instead of replying Hudson snatched the telephone off the hook and called the office of the National Holding Corporation on the long distance. He soon was in conversation with the "president" of the company.

"This is Hudson," he shouted. "I am in the office of Mr. Nebel, and he has been properly introduced to me and Jones. He is undoubtedly the best man we could talk business with. He is the most prominent man here and I will send you a letter to-night giving details. Mr. Nebel has a magnificent personality and looks like Emperor Franz Joseph, only more so. Every man, woman and child swears by him here. You say you know him by reputation—of course—certainly—um—yes, as good as gold; yes, and better. Hum—certainly."

Although Nebel pretended not to hear, he was in a greatly improved mood as Hudson hung up the receiver, and said:

"Now, Mr. Nebel, I am going to present to you five thousand dollars worth of stock in the National Holding Corporation, free of cost to you. Tut, tut, you are all right, sir, and what's more, I can fix it so that you can be the local representative. Now, how is that?"

"It is all Greek to me," gasped Nebel. "In the first place, what in blue blazes is the Holding what's-its name, and who, and how, and which?"

"The National Holding Corporation is a company organized for the purpose of cornering the ninety-seven kinds of insurance which is written nowadays. What's the use of having an expensive set of officers and offices for life insurance, another for fire, another for accident, plate glass, automobile, burglars and so on and so on? Instead of that, cut out all the fancy officers and fancy salaries and economize. See the point? By eliminating the operating and agency costs of running ninety-seven huge offices and by conducting the whole business from one main office, the ninety-eighth, we can save thousands of dollars for the benefit of the stockholders. That is plain; is it not?"

"Yes, of course," replied Nebel, "but that ninety-eighth office would have to be a trifle larger one than any of the others?"

"That goes without saying," exclaimed Hudson, enthusiastically. "But, what with addressing, multigraphing, duplicating and proper indexing, an enormous field can be covered from one main office. Now, in order to dispose of our stock, which sells at five times its par value, because of our present great intentions, we can hand out, simply give away, chunks of it to those who assist us in selling more for cash. It will require no cash outlay on your part, Mr. Nebel. We merely ask you for a few pointers and a little of your influence."

"Exactly, I see," nodded Nebel. "Let me look into your proposition a little. Leave me one of them fancy books of yours (I suppose you have them done up in embossed covers with little pink ribbons and tassels) and I will tell you what I will do if you will call at my house to-night."

As the two men walked out in high spirits, Jones asked in a whisper:

"For the sake of all things holy, tell me why you went through all that rigamarole with him?"

"Simply for the purpose of getting his mind off other matters and also because I realized he had to be tackled in a unique manner. It gave me a chance to flatter the stuffing out of him."

The pair agreed that if Mrs. Nebel

manifested any inclination to be present at the evening conference, Jones should get her away into the kitchen under the pretense that he wanted a drink of water. And, as expected, he was forced to drink a number of glasses of water during the evening, and did his best to keep the woman out of the parlor. As he sipped the eighth glass of water, not faster than a teaspoonful per minute, Jones heard Hudson pounding the table in the "setting" room and he knew that his partner had things well under way. He was determined to keep Mrs. Nebel out of the matter if he had to drink the well dry. He thankfully accepted the offer for another glass of water and suggested that they should get it direct from the pump. Much time was gained by lighting a lantern and stumbling about in the yard. When he returned to the house with Mrs. Nebel he was surprised to find Hudson waiting for him, hat in hand. Nebel had gone to bed and left word for his wife to "lock the front door when that gent had drunk the well dry."

"Did you land him?" whispered Jones, as they were beyond hearing distance.

"You bet," replied Hudson. "He wants you and me to do the talking, and he wants to do the actual selling. He has already made arrangements for us to be at Clover's Hall to-morrow evening. He wants us to speak to a bunch of boobs on 'the new and economical method of consolidating corporations.' And, say, he is very slick. He proposes that we do not mention the name of our company or the sale of stock at the meeting, but merely talk to educate the rummies up to the point. Then he will get their checks for us personally. You see? It sounds awfully sweet to me."

The meeting at the hall was a great success as a preliminary gathering, declared Nebel. It was opened by one of the leading preachers of the town and Hudson and Jones were introduced by Nebel as "two of the world's greatest insurance experts."

With his left hand tugging at the lapel of his coat, Hudson began his address. In glowing terms he spoke of the numerous advantages of the consolidation system. He said he felt that he was addressing a representative and distinguished audience, and he alluded to Mr. Nebel as the community's leading citizen, whose fame had gone abroad; he called Mr. Nebel the "Magnate of Marysburg."

Nebel sat bolt upright and stroked the place on his head where he used to have hair. He was deeply moved.

After reading exhaustive statistics, Hudson concluded by demonstrating the tremendous profits which would be made by stockholders in a managing company. During his speech he pounded the table, drank the water pitcher dry and quoted volumes of imaginary authorities and figures.



Mr. Nebel made a few final remarks and invited his townsmen to come to the rear rooms of the First National Bank, where the two great experts would give detailed information about the new proposition every day from eight in the morning until midnight.

"What do you think you will be able to do, Mr. Nebel?" asked Hudson, as they walked home together. "Just a rough estimate, you know."

"There is no need for one of them rough estimates," said Nebel. "I will merely say that I will sell them fellows fifty thousand dollars worth of stock inside of three weeks."

"How soon can we expect to get any real money?" asked Hudson, rather timidly. "My remittance is delayed, somehow."

"Yes, I know all about them remittances," smiled Nebel. "Here, take this on account. Good-night. See you to-morrow, fellers. This will keep you in cigarettes."

Hudson and Jones stood and admired a crisp ten dollar bill. Then they went to bed happy. The following morning the two promoters found several persons waiting for them at the bank. Al-



though the institution was not open for regular business until nine o'clock they found one of the clerks on hand and the back room cleared for their use. For days they talked and talked. They never dreamed of such popularity. It seemed that the entire population of the county was eager to invest. Nebel's name acted like a charm. On the evening of the tenth day Hudson staggered into his room and sank down on the bed, exhausted.

"For the sake of all that is holy, we must rest," he sighed. "Talk, talk, talk. My wind-pipe is rusty. But to-morrow is Sunday. I am sure we will rake in a fortune when his nibs begins to take in cash. He wants to get them good and eager first, you see, Jones?"

"Sure," said Jones; "he is a pippin of a salesman."

"I met Nebel on the way down here. He wants us to spend Sunday at his pretty little bungalow, out near a place called 'Emory's.' I should think that would be nice. Wouldn't you?"

"Well, I should say so," muttered Jones, and fell into a deep slumber.

After breakfast they found a four seated carriage waiting for them and the driver handed them the following message:

My dear Hudson and Jones:—

I have telephoned Emory to take good care of you. He will make you comfortable. He will bring you back when you are well rested. I hope you have a good time. I will have sold a good deal of stock by the time you get back. I will surprise you, you bet.

Nebel.

After a pleasant drive they arrived at Emory's resort, a pretty place on the shore of a lake. Next morning Mr. Emory himself took them in a small launch to an island in the center of the lake, where the private bungalow of Mr. Nebel was located. As they took their seats in the boat, two young men put several cases of canned goods, four sides of bacon and a large box of hard-tack into the craft.

"Do you keep a hotel over there?" asked Hudson.

"No," said Emory; "it is Mr. Nebel's

place and he believes in always making his guests as comfortable as possible."

The island was very small and the day proved ideal for fishing. Jones caught a large bass as soon as he threw in his hook. Emory prepared a refreshing lunch for his passengers, and then went out of the bungalow to let them eat alone.

Suddenly they heard the launch puffing away. Jones turned pale and ran to the door. Emory was lying in the bottom of the boat laughing. The little craft was puffing merrily away and Emory steered it carelessly with his foot.

"Hey," cried Jones, "wait a minute, Emory. Are you coming back for us to-night?"

A peal of laughter was the only reply and, looking across to the Emory resort, the two promoters saw the entire family and several neighbors holding their sides and howling with laughter.

"I don't like this," muttered Jones. Then his eyes fell on the huge supply of food in one corner of the room. His eyes opened wide and he crashed his fist down on the table.

"Marooned!" he howled.

"Hm, it looks like it," said Hudson, attempting to keep cool. "I guess you have hit it right. What kind of a game is this, anyhow?"

"Hey, what is this," exclaimed Jones, as he saw a small note nailed to a post by the landing. He read:

Gents:—

When you want me to call for you, just hoist the little red flag.

Emory.

"Pshaw," exclaimed Jones, "a bad conscience is the worst thing in the world. Why, everything is all right. False alarm."

"But what are they all laughing at?" demanded Hudson.

"I'll be jiggered if I know," replied Jones. "To-morrow we will hoist that little red rag hanging there. Let us spend the night here and rest up and go back when we feel like it."

The following morning Jones went down to the landing and hoisted the red flag. No one replied. The day passed



and the little piece of scarlet muslin fluttered in the breeze. Jones swore and Hudson joined in. Then they tried shouting, but to no avail. The day passed and so did several days. The Emory girls would come down to the shore of the lake and point at them and giggle, but that was all. Then a couple of days of chilling, penetrating rain followed, during which they could not even see the shore.

"I wonder how long we will have to stay here," almost sobbed Jones, one morning. "There is food for a month here."

"I am going to build a raft," said Hudson. "I am glad now that I read my 'Robinson Crusoe.'"

"What with?"

"Why the darned bungalow," declared Hudson, desperately. "If they don't fetch us away by tomorrow noon I'll tear off the doors and begin a little ship-building here. It is only about a half mile to shore and Nebel will just raise the dickens with the Emorys when he finds out about their neglect."

"I think he is behind the whole thing," said Jones. "But I can't see his motive. He can't sell any stock without us. Well, we get the commissions anyhow."

"I have a headache trying to figure this out," sighed Hudson.

Just then a faint voice was heard from somewhere in the mist.

"Clif—fee," came the call.

"My God, that sounds like my wife," cried Jones and put his hands up to his ears to hear better. "There is only one person on earth calling me by my third given name, Clifford, and that is Mrs. Jones."

They ran around to the other side of the island. Gradually a boat, rowed by a very small boy, could be discerned in the heavy air. Two women were sitting in it.

"Well, as I am alive!" exclaimed Hudson, "there is Caroline, my wife, and Mrs. Jones. Well, I'll be—"

The two men performed a veritable welcome dance in the mud while the women sobbed.

"Dearie, what has been the matter?" demanded Mrs. Jones. "Why, you look like a couple of tramps. Haven't you had a good time and why have you not written for days?"

The men explained the situation and the women wept aloud and long.

"Boo-hoo," wailed Mrs. Jones. "Cliffee, can you ever forgive me? I thought you were out here enjoying yourselves and I induced Mrs. Hudson to come along and spy on you. It was a good thing after all. You know that in your letter, the one with the two-dollar bill, you said that you expected to make ever so much money. We got to Marysburg last night and the livery boy said you were here, fishing. We took the shortest cut up here. Will you please pay the boy?"

Jones coughed.

"Hey, kid, help yourself to bacon, canned goods and anything you see," said Hudson. "Take these things home to your ma."

"I was given a letter by Mr. Nebel, said the boy. 'Here it is.'"

Hudson could not conceal his excitement as he read:



H. H. Hudson and Will U. C. Jones.

Dear Gents:—The Marysburg Corporation, a concern organized for the purpose of consolidating the Marysburg Fire Insurance Company, the Farmers Mutual, the Marysburg Merchants Accident and Indemnity, several branches of out of town companies and a number of other concerns, is now in fine shape. Our slogan is "Economy."

When you gents figured on using me for a cat's-paw to skin my life-long neighbors and townsmen, I decided to use you to my best advantage. You had a fine scheme and why could it not be worked locally?

It could. It has been. It is.

I let you call at my house; I let you drink my well half dry and then I let you do all the talking. I decided to use you until you got hoarse. As I promised, I have sold fifty thousand dollars' worth of stock in

a few days. But I did not say in what particular company I was going to sell it. While I was gathering in checks and cash, you were fishing. Don't blame Emory. He works for me. He telephoned me a couple of times and said you were acting like wild people and should he go after you in the boat?

Considering the ten dollars and all the good water you had to drink, I think we are about square. Hudson, you are an orator what is good at explaining things. Jones, you are also good. Now, if you want work, I'll give you each ten dollars per week and found, if you want to work for the new company. If you don't accept what I offer you, what is real liberal, let me give you a pointer. Three miles south of Emory's, if you follow the main road, you will find Nebel Junction, where trains stop once a while.

Yours affectionately,

Max Nebel.

P.S. When you did that long-distancing you overlooked the little thingumbob on the telephone what you ring with. You are great long-

distance talkers. How is fishing?

The nature of the language used for the following few minutes proved a revelation to the two women and the little boy.

"Holy smoke," sputtered Hudson. "I should have turned that bell. He was wise all the time. He simply put us in harness, let us talk ourselves hoarse and then he marooned us."

When they reached the shore of the lake, Hudson glanced alternately at his wife's ear-rings and at a small diamond on Mrs. Jones' finger.

"Say, boy," he said, slowly, "is there a pawnshop at Nebel Junction?"

"No, mister," replied the boy, "but Mr. Nebel's cousin keeps one at New Freedom, three miles further down the tracks."

"Darn—let's walk to New Freedom," said Hudson.

#### DO YOU BELIEVE IN FREE SPEECH?

**Y**OU'VE heard, no doubt, of people being "talked to death;" but it's a ten to one guess that you've never known of a real case. We have no intention of bringing one to your attention, but we do wish to prepare you for the case of a man who got so very tired of hearing people talk that he desired nothing so much as to go to prison—and stay there. He was a Ready Listener, and he figures big in the story, "Free Speech," by Wallace Irwin, which will be one of the attractions in the DECEMBER RED BOOK MAGAZINE. Mr. Irwin is the writer who made the nation laugh with his "Letters of a Japanese Schoolboy." Read his story, if you would guard against missing a really great piece of humor.

# The Blue-Mud Line

A business race to convince a father-in-law

by  
KENNETT HARRIS

Author of "The Bounds of Badinage," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARE BRIGGS

**W**HAT with the sheet-iron stove, whose sides and first section of pipe were heated cherry red; the tobacco, which was burning freely, and the five men of average lung capacity who lounged about the bunks, the air of the fourteen-by-sixteen log cabin was comfortably vitiated. Grizzled old Jim Marler, who had just added his snow-soaked miner's boots to the row behind the stove, and was now beating the circulation back into his hands, commented on its pleasant balminess, and then volunteered the information that he was going to fix up his own shack and get into shape to dig out the pay streak from the "Halleluja Boys."

Sam Messick sneered openly, denying the existence of the pay streak and condemning Mr. Marler's persistence, which latter quality reminded him of old Israel Tullibert and Alonzo Skeggs, down in the foothills, in their fight over the Blue Mud Spa transportation.

"There was two men that nothing short of a stick of giant would move once they got sot," said Messick, after he had punched his hay-stuffed pillow into an easy hollow behind his neck.



He was one of the first settlers, and he looked the part. He said he let his whiskers grow the way the Lord intended them, which was a sacrilegious reflection on the Almighty.

"The diff'rance was that Alonzo would saunter off when he heard the fuse sizzle. Old Israel wouldn't. He'd sit on it an' try to hold it down.

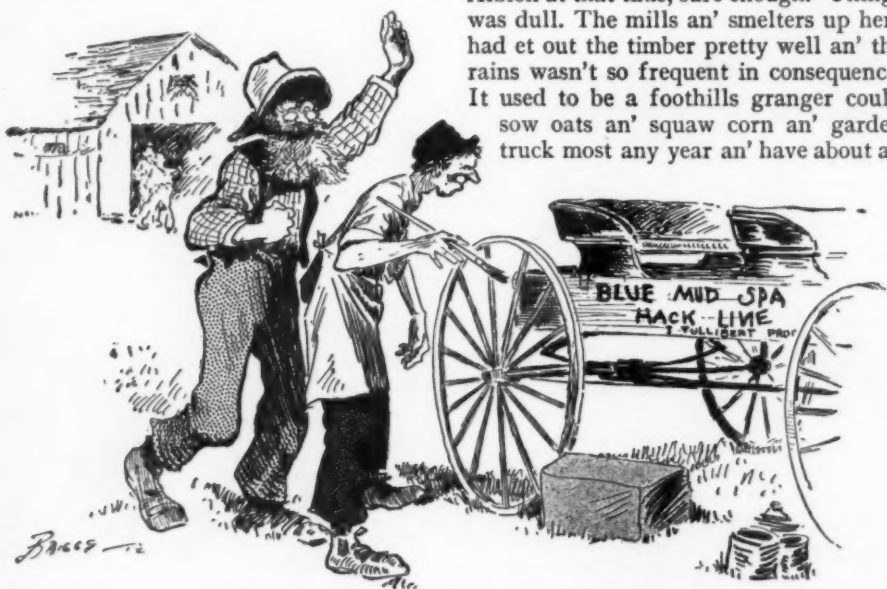
"They both run liveryies in Albion," continued Messick. "Old Israel was one of the first settlers an' he looked the part. He had a face on him that seemed like it had been chipped out of wrought iron with a cold chisel and then case

hardened, an' he said he let his whiskers grow the way the Lord intended 'em, which was a sacrilegious reflection on the Almighty. He talked now an' then, but that was because he didn't know the sign language. And yet, that old skeezicks had one of the prettiest girls for a daughter that ever stuck a number four foot into a three-an'-a-half shoe. Plump as a little partridge, she was, with big blue eyes an' a mess of dimples that played all over her rosy cheeks when she talked to you, in a way that made it hard for you to act like a gentleman. I jest

faces an' hawked an' cleared his throat every time Alonzo was spoke of.

"Alonzo tried to love the old man for Bessie's sake, but he didn't make a good fist of it. I take notice that if you know a fellow has it in for you good an' plenty, in course o' time you get to feelin' like you'd scratch him on high moral grounds if he ever got on your party ticket. That was the situation as regards Old Man Tullibert an' Alonzo an' Bessie.

"Well, there wasn't much business at Albion at that time, sure enough. Things was dull. The mills an' smelters up here had et out the timber pretty well an' the rains wasn't so frequent in consequence. It used to be a foothills granger could sow oats an' squaw corn an' garden truck most any year an' have about an



Tullibert asked him what was agitatin' him.

hate to think about little Bessie even now.

"Alonzo was a little fellow, kind o' dark complected an' cheerful an' gabby. Them kind aint generally mule headed, but Alonzo was. Old Israel didn't like him. For one thing, he said he was a fool an' didn't have horse sense, let alone business sense, comin' into a burg an' startin' an opposition livery business when one man couldn't skassly make a good livin'; for another thing, Alonzo had been sparkin' up to Bessie, an' Bessie took a kind of a contrary streak an' a particular shine to Alonzo. After while, the old man got so that he made

even break on a crop, but it got so he might as well try to raise hair on a bald head by scratching it, as to plow any land he couldn't irrigate, thinkin' to raise anythin' but a tornado of dust. The railroad had got into the town, but the trouble was that it passed on, an' a town can't live on a railroad unless it's an eat-in' station. The ranches all shipped their beef from Cinnamon Buttes, too.

"When you get up against it good an' hard, the thing is to set down an' apply logic to the situation. Logic's the art of figgerin' out that if you haven't got a cent an' your credit aint good an' you can't hustle, you'll go hungry. Them





There was another race back to Albion.

days there was a feller named Orville Frary who got hailed an' scorched out of his little ranch in Calico Cañon, who was great on logic. He was busted an' the walkin' wasn't good an' he had a healthy appetite an' a considerable modesty, which called for clo'es, so he set down an' turned his logic loose.

"What is there in this man's country?" he asked himself, an' the reply come prompt: 'Mountain scenery.'

"That's good as far as it goes. The point is it's too common. Good to draw to though, maybe. What else?"

"Bracin' atmosphere."

"Good again. Mountain scenery an' bracin' atmosphere. All I want now to make a first class health resort is some sort of a spring."

"Jest then he happened to think of Blue Mud Spring, over a piece north. Elegant water; jest as wet as any you ever seen an' a heap of it, but nothing for it to irrigate but ten yards square of blue mud an' ten thousand acres of sandstone hills an' gulches, with pine that nobody could haul out, or it would have

been snapped up years before. Well, he talked it up an' finally hypnotized Jim Bradley, the Albion storekeeper, to go in with him an' they built a hotel an' done some advertisin' an' started the Spa.

"Jest about the time the hotel got built, Old Man Tullibert took a notion that it was goin' to pay to run a hack line over there. He never had many bright ideas in his life an' he was a good deal set up over this one. He calculated that it would displease Alonzo, for another thing, an' he come near smilin' an' crackin' his face all up at the thought o' that. So one morning he gets Bob Sackett, the painter over to the barn, an' has him paint 'BLUE MUD SPA HACK LINE, I. TULLIBERT, PROP.' on a four-seated spring wagon he'd got.

"Sackett made him mad when he told him what he wanted, startin' to snicker. After he'd got to work on it, every once in a while he'd start to snicker again, an' when Tullibert asked him what was agitatin' him, he broke out worse than



ever. 'Try to overlook it, Israel,' he says. 'I jest thought it was kind o' curus havin' a hack line over to that old spring. It's my light heartedness. I hope you don't mind it.'

"No," says Tullibert, 'not to say "mind," but I hate to see a man actin' like a fool. He ought to be able to make a bluff at havin' sense enough to last him overnight. But it's your own reputation you're triffin' with, not mine.'

"Next mornin' Tullibert hitched up his team to the wagon an' jogged off. As he turned the corner into Main street, he was kinder s'prised to see most of the population of Albion out on the sidewalk an', as he passed by, some of 'em swung their hats an' yelled; but he put it down to town pride an' let it go at that. There was more whoopin' when he stopped at the post office to see if there was any mail for Frary's folks, an' the mob seemed real interested in the sign on the wagon. He didn't take no notice though, but drove off, partickler dignified. It wasn't till he got clear of town that he hopped out an' took a view of the wagon from all sides. Nothin' to snicker or whoop at as he could see. The letterin' all right—no mistakes in spelling. He grunted an' climbed in again an' pounded along the road.

"He'd got about a quarter of the way when he thought he heard the sound of a team comin' behind, but he didn't turn his head, so it was suthin' of a surprise to him when here come Alonzo Skeggs rangin' up alongside drivin' a light rig with a canvas awnin' over it an' painted on the side, 'BLUE MUD SPA TRANSPORTATION LINE, ALONZO SKEGGS, PROP.'

"Hello, Mr. Tullibert!" calls Alonzo, loud an' cheerful. 'Travelin' or goin' somewheres?'

"Israel glared at him. 'I'm a-goin' to Blue Mud, young man,' he says, 'an' I'm a-goin' to make the trip every day, what's more.'

"Not with them ol' crowbaits, are you?" says Alonzo, flickin' his whip at the old man's team. 'You mean twice a week, don't you? Say, Mr. Tullibert, why don't you feed them cayuses o' yours? Honest, it does a horse good to feed it. Start in easy an' give 'em about

two tablespoonfuls of oats a day till their constitutions gets used to it an' then increase the dose until you get so you're jammin' as much as half a pint a day a piece into 'em, an' you'll be surprised at the diff'runce it will make.'

"Tullibert didn't say nothin', but he came nigh to swallerin' his tobacco.

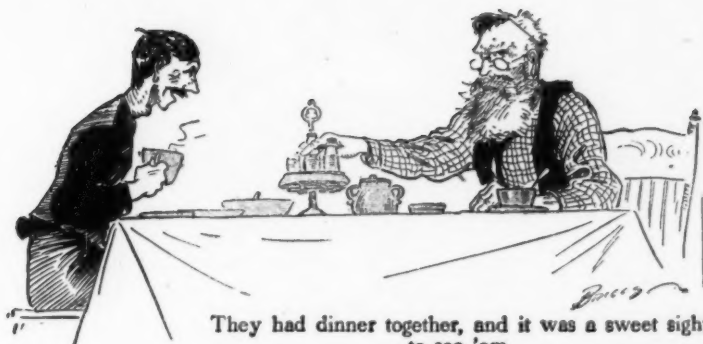
"Well," says Alonzo, 'I'd like to linger here an' enjoy your improvin' conversation, but life's too short an' my wrists is gettin' tired holdin' my horses in. Any word I can take to Blue Mud for you? Be along about supper time, wont you?'

"I'll show you," says the old man, an' he raised up in his seat an' put the gad to his plugs.

"They'd been goin' a pretty good clip up to then, but from that on, they jest hit the high places. Alonzo yelled to his brons an' they started in on the keen run. There they had it, nip an' tuck, down the dry gulches an' sky hootin' up again, whangetty bang over the boulders, clunketty plunk in the mud holes, scratchin' the sides of the rock faces in the hill cuts, skimmin' the edges of the drop offs, scootin' on two wheels around the curves, yippety yip! clatterin', jouncin', an' thumpin' along clear into Blue Mud. There wasn't twenty yards between 'em when they pulled up in front of Frary's, the horses drippin' lather, but it was Alonzo was ahead.

"They had dinner together, an' it was a sweet sight to see 'em, accordin' to Frary—some like the bob-cat an' bull terrier that feller over in Laramie had trained to eat out o' the same dish; they was peaceful, but you kind of expected trouble at any moment. Alonzo seemed to lay himself out to be aggravatin', advisin' the old man to buy himself a dust coat for the next trip an' such jocularities. 'I wont say good-by to you now,' he remarks, as Tullibert got up from the table. 'I'll stay an' smoke a pipe or two with Orville an' ketch you up on the road.'

"All the same, he didn't waste no time smokin'. There was another race back to Albion an' that time there wasn't ten yards between 'em when they got in, an' Tullibert had the best of it. That was the beginning. It wasn't a race



They had dinner together, and it was a sweet sight to see 'em.

every day from that out, but there was middlin' sure to be one if either of 'em had a passenger. It was a long time before it paid either of 'em horse feed, but they kep' right on. Old Man Tullibert said that he started the first Blue Mud hack out of Albion an' he'd drive the last. He wasn't goin' to be run out by no little sawed off, slack jawed, lop eared opposition with a bunch of ring boned, spavined plugs, that ever stuck his snub nose in wherever he thought some honest man was likely to make a honest dollar. Alonzo said that while he wasn't makin' big money on his line, he was satisfied to keep right on till the street cars got to runnin'. Bessie, she didn't say nothin'.

"About that time, Major Brundage, who owned the Knickerbocker Hotel, the Merchants' State bank, the Brundage-Smith block and the town council, began to sit up an' take notice of the spa. Frary had tried to interest him in it at the jump-out, but he couldn't see it then. Nothin' to it! Now he thought that it might be worth while, an' he reckoned he might see his way to put a little money into it. All he wanted in return was the consciousness of havin' helped a deservin' enterprise, the majority of the stock an' most of the profits. That time it was Frary that got afflicted with weak eyes, so the major begun to apply logic to the situation, himself.

"He figgered that Frary hadn't got the climate cornered an' that there was several independent blocks of scenery lyin' around loose. He wasn't no hog, but it certainly made him squeal when anythin' like swill went a-past his pen.

Well, he prospected around until at last he struck a spring. It was a sulphur spring at that—sulphur an' other truck. It didn't smell good an' ever since I tasted of it I've had my stomach turned against water as a beverage, but the major had a sample assayed an' it must have been rich because he raised money on it, an' the next thing, a surveyor was out there layin' off a townsite takin' in the spring's sphere of influence.

"Meantime, they got a post office at the spa, an' Old Man Tullibert got in ahead of Alonzo an' corralled the mail contract. That tickled him a whole lot. 'What did I tell you?' he says to his Bessie. 'Didn't I tell you that feller didn't have no sort o' snap or business sense? Got it right under his nose, b'gosh!'

"'Mebbe he thought you needed it worse than he did an' he'd let you have it,' says the girl. Then she got up quick an' run for a dipper o' water. She said she'd never seen a person have a fit, but she sure thought her pap was goin' to have one then.

"Soon after that, Alonzo had his head stable chambermaid fixed out with a cap with 'BLUE MUD SPA TRANSPORTATION' on it in gold letters, an' workin' the west bound trains, an' for a while, he got most of the passengers. Then Tullibert followed suit an' edged back again. He felt so good about that he began braggin' again both to his daughter an' folks outside the family. Once he offered to bet that he'd have Alonzo busted up in business inside of a couple of months. Somebody went an' told Alonzo about that, naturally.

"'I think it's sinful to bet, but I feel convinced that Mr. Tullibert is mistaken,' says Alonzo. 'You wait about a week an' you'll see somethin'.'"

"Before the week was out we did see somethin', sure enough. We heard it first. Umph parar rara; jingletty clink, clip-pety clap, here she come! Alonzo a-settin' up on the box with his elbows squared, crackin' his whip over four bays in nickel plated harness an' Wes Turner a-blowin' a horn an' hollerin', 'All aboard for Blue Mud Spa!' Jest about the nobbiest turn-out that ever come out of a wagon shop, bright red body, sage green runnin' gear, russet leather cushions, nickel plated lamps, a wicker basket for the horn an' a rail for baggage. The slickest, shiniest, gayest kind of a stage coach.

"Round an' round the town they drove, a-past the post office, a-past the Knickerbocker Hotel, where Major Brundage was settin' back in a rockin' chair pickin' his teeth, with his heels on the porch railin', an' where Wes give a few extra loud toots on the horn, an' finely a-past Tullibert's, where the old man was a-hookin' up to his wagon.

"Alonzo waved his whip, cordial an' pleasant. Old man Tullibert looked up, took in the gorgeous outfit in one stiddy glare, an' gritted his teeth. Then the coach trundled along, proud an' majestic, t'ords the Blue Mud road.

"'I guess they've got you now, Israel,' says Billy Peters, who was watchin' him hitch up.

"'Not by a jugful!' says Tullibert. 'I reckon there's more coaches an' better ones in Omaha.' But there wasn't no real sperrit in the way he said it.

"When Alonzo got back on the return trip that evenin', Major Brundage come out on the porch an' hailed him. He pulled up, an' Old Major toddled down an' made a pretty careful inspection of the coach.

"'Tol'able neat turn-out, Alonzo,' he says, at last.

"'Fair to middlin',' says Alonzo. 'It

aint quite the rig the spa calls for, but I can get somethin' a little more tony after a while.'

"'You wont need to, says the Major. 'Inside of a year, there wont be any spa. The mountain sheep will be a-comin' down to drink at the spring again an' the coyotes will be a-feedin' their families in the bridal chamber of Frary's hotel. I hate to see you foolin' your hard earned money away like this, Alonzo. You haven't seen Sulphuria lately, have you?'

"'I passed within a mile o' there last summer an' I think I smelled it,' Alonzo retorts.

"'It's a-goin' to be a mighty live little place in



The sick and afflicted from Sioux City, Omaha, health and

another month,' observes the Major.

"'When the breeze blew from the springs, it kind o' gave me the impression of havin' been dead some time,' says Alonzo.

"'You wont think that way when you see the sick an' afflicted from Sioux City, Omaha, Chardon, Chicago an' the upper Hills flockin' in there in thousands to find health an' youthful vigor in its sparklin' waters, bubblin' fresh an' uncontaminated from Nature's laboratory,' says the Major. 'When the anæmic, affluent and dyspeptic denizens of them great cities teem in its perfectly appointed hotels, toning their livers an' enrich-

ing liverymen, you'll see your error. I've sold thirty-two lots there already, Alonzo. I tell you Sulphuria is a wonder. You come an' see the sanitarium an' bath house we're puttin' up. I haven't been sayin' much up to now, but we're about ready for the grand openin', an' the Oklahoma rush wont be a circumstance to it.'

"There's twelve guests in Frary's now," says Alonzo. 'More comin'. The rush is on with us. Still, ours aint no boom: it's a stiddy growth, an' we've got the water an' the giant pines standin' like solemn sentinels to back it, not to speak of the air, which is like new wine,



Chardon, Chicago an' the upper Hills flockin' in to find youthful vigor.

an' the rugged crags that pierce the unclouded blue of the turquoise sky. An' we're gettin' the cures right along.'

"The major shook his finger at him. 'We've got the capital,' he says mighty impressive. 'We've got capital enough to start a first class stage line over to Sulphuria, which I reckon we'll have to do right away. Well, that's a pretty slick outfit you have there, as I said, but honest, I think you must have been crazy to buy it.'

"I reckon not," says Alonzo, smilin' kind o' easy.

"You come over after a while an' let me show you them blue prints. I think

you'll be interested,' the major hollers, as he was drivin' off.

"Mebbe I will," Alonzo hollers back.

"The next morning when the new coach came jingling up to Tullibert's hack, the red paint an' nickel flashin' in the sun, Alonzo turned around in his seat to Wes Turner, who was executin' wild music on the horn. 'Don't blow, Wes,' he says. 'The poor devil is dyin'.'

"There certainly was a discouraged sort of a hunch to the old man's shoulders when he looked up as Alonzo went joggin' by. I guess Alonzo did feel sorry for him, sure enough. All the same, Tullibert's jaw wasn't hangin' loose by no means, an' he whipped right into the middle of the road an' jockeyed the coach clear into Blue Mud. Once or twice Alonzo might have got a-past him, but for some reason, he didn't try, but held back his team clear of the dust an' seemed to be a-studyin'. He let the old man start out ahead of him on the trip back, too, an' when he got back to Albion, he drove around by the old man's barn an' pulled up there. Tullibert had jest got his horses stabled an' fed when Alonzo got out, an' tellin' Wes to take the coach to the barn, walked into the little office.

"What do you want?" Tullibert growls.

"I want to talk a little sense to you, Mr. Tullibert," Alonzo remarks. 'I've been studyin' on the matter an' I've come to the conclusion that

you an' me oughtn't to be cuttin' each other's throats this-a-way. I don't mind sayin' that I'm sick of it.'

"I calculated you would be afore I got through with you," says the old man unpleasantly. He rubbed across his Adam's apple under his grizzled whiskers an' then held out his hand. 'I don't see no blood on my fingers,' he says.

"You're color blind," says Alonzo. 'I see it, an' as far as I'm concerned, I'm through with bluffin'. You don't feel friendly t'ords me, an' you needn't deny it.'

"I wasn't a-goin' to," says Tullibert.

"All the same, I'm goin' to make





"There's twelve guests in Frary's now," says Alonzo. "More comin.' The rush is on with us."

you a fair an' square proposition,' Alonzo resooms. 'There aint enough for the both of us on the Blue Mud road, an' if we both keep on, we'll both go broke sooner or later. That's sense. I don't mind goin' broke so much, myself. I'm younger than you are, an' a single man, an' I'll have time a-plenty to pick up again. All the same, I'd just as lief hang on to what I've got. If you want to keep on a-fightin', I'm agreeable, an' you've found out that I'm a pretty good single handed fighter, I guess, but I come here a-holdin' out the olive branch. I propose to pay you a fair price to quit.'

"'You do, eh?' sneers Tullibert.

"'I'm able to do it,' says Alonzo, 'an' I'd sooner than have hard feelin's.'

"'I guess you aint the only one that's able,' says Tullibert. 'I could buy you

out for the matter of that.'

"Alonzo laughed. 'Nobody wouldn't say that you had backed out if they understood I'd paid you to quit,' he said. 'But then if you feel that way, an' you think that you can afford it, you give me three hundred dollars an' I'll pull off to-morrow. That aint no more than fair. Jest as you like, of course. I'd like to live in peace with my neighbors, but it's up to you.'

"Tullibert clawed on his whiskers for a while an' studied. Alonzo pulled out a cigar an' lit it. 'Or you can name your own price,' he says. 'I'd jest as soon keep right on if I can do it without unpleasantness.'

"Tullibert went over to his desk an' opened it slow an' deliberate, an' got out his check book. Five minutes later, Alonzo had the check tucked in his waistcoat pocket an' Old Man Tullibert had Alonzo's agreement to pull off the Blue Mud route.

"'Now,' says Old Man Tullibert, 'I reckon you wont have no partickler use for that there coach of yours. If you feel like makin' the price right, I might take it off your hands. It's got to be a bargain though.'

"Alonzo looked real sad. 'By jolly! I wish't I'd known you wanted it, Mr. Tullibert,' he said. 'I didn't, though, an' I signed up yesterday to run it to Sulphuria for Major Brundage at three hundred a month through the season.'

"The old man got his own way though," commented Marler.

"Not altogether," said Messick. "You see he had to own up that Alonzo had some business ability, which removed one of the objections he had to him as a son-in-law. Bessie, she removed the rest. An' now it's the BLUE MUD AND SULPHURIA TRANSPORTATION COMPANY, TULLIBERT & SKEGGS, PROPS. I understand that three hundred dollars went into house furnishings."





## THE BEST of the AUTUMN FLOOD of PLAYS by Louis V. De Foe

Photograph by White, New York.

Scene from "The Governor's Lady;" Emmett Corrigan and Emma Dunn in the Childs Restaurant.

**T**HAT life-giving spark which is the secret of stagecraft genius, which metamorphoses the carefully calculated make-believe of the theatre into nature itself, has again turned a play into a human document, and this before the dramatic season has progressed beyond its experimental state. Once more it is David Belasco who has exerted such magical power. Alice Bradley's domestic drama, "The Governor's Lady," for which she disclaims all but the central idea, in the handling of its producer

ceases to be a play and becomes a glance into the mystery of actual life. Though his stages have held in other years more pretentious dramas, though sometimes he has found it less necessary to mask occasional inconsistency with artifice, "The Governor's Lady" is about the most appealing and most human play Mr. Belasco has produced.

Do you recall in the newspaper columns of the last three years three pitiful actual instances of the wife, bred to the humble domestic routine of the cottage in which she helped her husband to lay



Gladys Hanson as *Katherine Strickland* and Emma Dunn as *Mary Slade* in "The Governor's Lady."

Photograph by White, New York.

the foundation of a great fortune, who found herself unable to keep pace with him when he stepped from obscurity into the world of fashion, formality and big affairs? The names of these women appeared in New York's Social Register, but they never emerged into the society that deems a box at the opera the fulfillment of highest ambition. Two of these tragedies have had their *dénouements* in the divorce courts; in the third the tragedy is the greater because its miseries are unending.

It is precisely such a domestic catastrophe as these which supplies the motive of "The Governor's Lady" and turns the play into a powerful alignment of the growing divorce evil in America. So closely does it skirt the borders of the real that its pathos goes straight to the heart. It pays little heed to the subtleties of character or to the intricacies of situa-

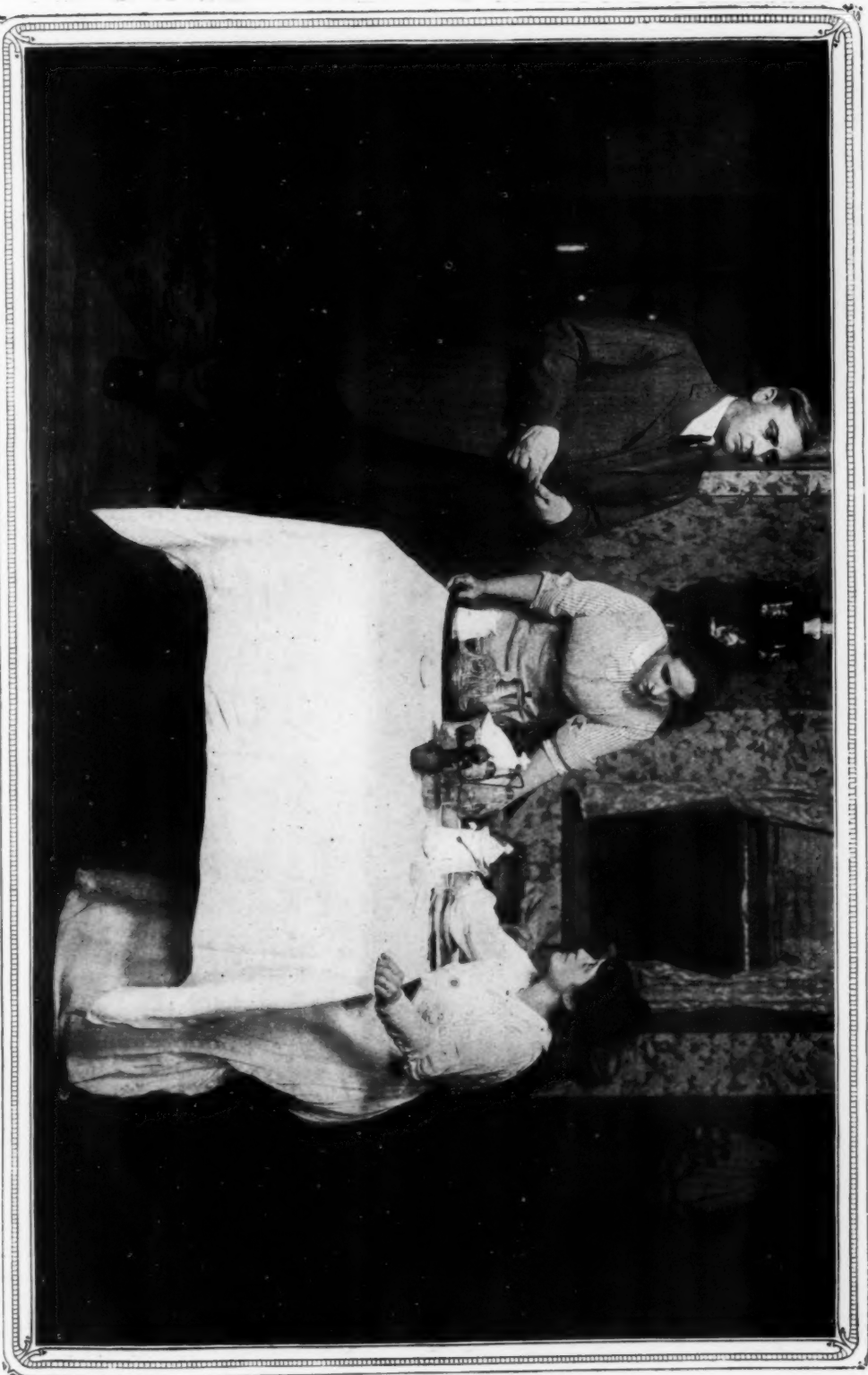
tion. It is, instead, honest, straightforward, sentimental drama, that grips you at the start and succeeds in holding you in thrall until the end.

Almost immediately when the curtain rises, it is possible to detect the root of the trouble that afterwards disrupts the costly, pretentious home of *Daniel Slade*. He is an ex-miner, whom unswerving will and tenacity of purpose have lifted above his early circumstances, and who, with the help of his wife's economy and good advice, eventually finds himself a multi-millionaire, occupying the most extravagant house in his Western city.

But the showy, fashionable life which *Slade* is bent on living is not for the little feminine paragon of the domestic virtues who shares the home with him. She cares nothing for expensive dresses or fashionable entertainments. Her joy is to remain at home, engrossed in her domestic duties. She trembles at the

Photograph by White, New York.

Emmett Corrigan as *Daniel Slade*, Jane Bridges as *Susan*, and Emma Dunn as *Mary Slade*, in "The Governor's Lady."





Photograph by White, New York. Copyright by Charles Frohman, 1912.  
 Nina Severing as *Sophie Pelling*, John Drew as *Thomas Pelling*, Mary Boland as *Kalleia*, and Margaret Watson as *Dulcie Elstead*, in "The Perplexed Husband."



formalities of the big world; she even fears the obsequiousness of her servants.

*Slade* is not without redeeming virtues. His point of view is changed, that is all. He sees the necessity of living up to his new circumstances. He has broadened in the companionship of other men of affairs, while his wife has stood still. To make matters worse, he has been seized with political aspirations. His name has been mentioned for the governorship. He thinks he sees the advantage of putting on a social front.

The widening abyss between the *Slades* is revealed with many deft touches, as they sit in the evening in the elaborate drawing room which is so oppressive to the wistful little woman. You hear her protest freely that she wants only to be left alone. You see her flee from her fashionable callers. You sympathize with her, for you realize that it is not stubbornness which rules her—only the forces of nature and habit which she cannot shake off.

By and by the parting of the ways is reached. First mystified, then horrified, she listens to her husband's suggestion



Photograph by White, New York.  
Copyright by Charles Frohman, 1912.  
Mary Boland as *Kallera* and John  
Drew as *Thomas Pelling*, in Alfred  
Sutro's new comedy, "The Perplexed  
Husband."



Photograph by  
White, New York.  
Madge Ken-  
nedy as Little  
Miss Brown in  
"Little Miss  
Brown."

that it would be better for him to live at his club and permit her, with the ample means which he will provide, to go her way alone. His explanation of the necessities of the situation does not cause her to relax, even for a moment, her love. She finally assents to the proposed separation, but at the mention of a divorce her spirit flares up. *Slade* may have ceased to love her. He may be anxious to cast her off. But never will she give up her right to her name.

There is a scene now in the library of *Senator Strickland's* house, in which is disclosed more fully *Slade's* unbending will as he overrides every obstacle in his pursuit of the governorship. The gubernatorial mansion must be adorned by a younger woman, of beauty and social distinction. Though his suit for divorce has not yet been won, *Slade* drives a cold matrimonial bargain with *Strickland's* ambitious daughter. Their marriage shall be loveless, but not without the rewards of luxury which wealth can bring.

Meanwhile *Mrs. Slade*, still loving, still patient, still determined, has gone back to the cottage where, in her husband's less prosperous days, the happy years of her life were passed. She knows nothing of the other woman in the scheme of *Daniel Slade's* ambitions. The bitter truth dawns upon her only when *Katherine Strickland* calls to sound her on the subject of her opposition to a divorce. The younger girl is disarmed when she is brought to a realization of the goodness and loyalty of the plain little woman whom she is conspiring to replace. Revulsion is followed by the bitterest remorse. She cries out that she is the basest creature in all the world.

The discovery of another woman in the case has a new effect upon *Mrs. Slade*. Her determination changes instantly. Now it is she who will demand a divorce and that demand shall be made at this very moment, when she has undermined her husband's power over her young rival. The opportunity to assert herself comes with the unexpected arrival of *Slade*, who quickly realizes the new situation and suggests that a reconciliation may be brought about.

It is this scene between the heart-

broken, old-fashioned little wife and her husband, whom she invites to sit at the table in the dining room where their earlier years were spent, that raises the drama to its emotional climax and bares a woman's tormented soul. So homely, so simple is the interview that it finds its way straight to the audience's heart. Its *dénouement* is that the woman scorned but now triumphant drives her unworthy husband from her door.

If the play ended here it might be truer to the stern logic of life. But there is yet to come one of those remarkable feats of theatrical realism for which Mr. Belasco is famous. The curtain rises on an epilogue which supplies a conventionally happy ending for the story. Pictured on the stage with every detail complete, is a replica of a Childs restaurant, one of those cheap and glistening caravanseries so familiar to all New Yorkers and their visitors. It is exact in its steaming coffee urns, exact in its wheat cakes sputtering on the griddles, exact in its hungry denizens who gorge themselves at the rows of tables. It is, in fact, the real thing, even to its various pungent odors.

Into this restaurant comes *Mrs. Slade* for a cup of coffee one night three months after her final break-



Photograph by White, New York.  
Madge Kennedy as *Little Miss Brown*,  
and Mattie Ferguson as *the Maid*, in  
"Little Miss Brown."

ing with her husband. Into it accidentally drops *Slade*, with his chauffeur. The couple meet face to face. There is a surprised, embarrassed greeting. And at the end *Slade* bears his little country-mouse wife in his arms to his waiting automobile to begin life anew.

One of the secrets of the effectiveness of "The Governor's Lady" is the remarkable skill with which Mr. Belasco has chosen his actors to suit their parts. Probably no other woman on our stage is so thoroughly fitted as Emma Dunn for the rôle of the simple, modest, wistful little woman, and the performance she gives is so sincere and unconscious in its trembling pathos that its effect at times becomes almost overwhelming. Emmett Corrigan, in the difficult character of *Daniel Slade*—difficult because he must contrive not to forfeit the audience's whole sympathy—gives a portrayal equally faithful to life. A more complex rôle than either of the main characters is *Katherine Strickland*, for it must show at once the good and bad sides of the younger woman's nature. Gladys Hanson accomplishes this part to perfection. There are a dozen other characters, all close transcripts from life and all admirably acted. About the whole play is an enveloping atmosphere of reality in which there is scarcely a trace of the artifice of the theatre.

NO new theatrical season in New York can be said to have fairly begun, or at least to have attracted to itself that social attention which is all important to the prosperity of plays, until John Drew has stepped back into the limelight in the latest sample of the style of society comedy that prevails at the moment in London. Which, all things considered, is one of the strangest of our strange conventions of the stage, since it is always possible to guess with reasonable accuracy the nature of the rôle in which he is to appear. Mr. Drew's plays change annually but the characters he assumes seldom vary to the slightest degree.

Although Mr. Drew has long followed the gallant practice of interesting first of all the feminine portion of his audiences, he has deviated from it this year. "The Perplexed Husband," the very thin but wittily satirical comedy which Mr. Alfred Sutro has written for him, will be certain to make its strongest humorous appeal to men—anyway, to those men who view with alarm, as the political platforms put it, the growing inclination of women to assert the complete independence



Photograph by White, New York.  
Oliver Harper Thorne and William Morris as Mrs.  
"Little Miss Brown." Mrs. Dennison asks an ex-  
fimsy than the lingerie she finds in her husband's





and Mr. Richard Dennison in  
planations that shall be less  
apartments.

of her sex and claim a right to the ballot. "The Perplexed Husband" is a well aimed shot at the vulnerable spots of the suffragette movement.

If you have seen Mr. Drew in any of his last half dozen characters, you can imagine what manner of man is *Thomas Pelling*, whom he impersonates in Mr. Sutro's play. *Pelling* leaves an affectionate wife and two little children when he goes on a long business trip, only to find on his return everything in his household changed. During his absence *Sophie* has fallen under the influence of a fatuous humbug, *Clarence Woodhouse*, and an aggressive disciple of woman's rights, *Dulcie Elstead*. They have worked upon her shallow mind until she has been brought around to the belief that a devoted wife is a social parasite and that it is her duty to embrace the movement which is to reform the world. She has also witnessed a performance of Ibsen's "A Doll's House" and has accepted *Nora Helmer*, who deserted her children rather than remain her husband's "doll," as her model of right conduct. At her invitation *Woodhouse*, whom she calls "The Master," and *Mrs. Elstead*, whom she regards as a paragon of wisdom, have quartered themselves in *Pelling's* house, and the trio are engaged in working out the problem of woman's salvation.

*Pelling* is surprised when *Sophie* does not meet him at the train. He is perplexed when she refuses to throw herself into his arms at the front door. He is mystified when she declines the present of a set of furs which he has brought back to her from Russia. But he begins to comprehend when she describes to him the beauties of the character of *Nora Helmer* in "A Doll's House," although he demurs that it must be a bad play and can't have a long run. He is greatly dismayed when, at his threat to throw *Woodhouse* and *Mrs. Elstead* out of the house, bag and baggage, *Sophie* strikes an heroic attitude and declares she will go with them.

It is *Agatha Marcel*, *Pelling's* sensible sister, who suggests a remedy to cure *Sophie* of her suffragette vagaries. The treatment she proposes is the old-fashioned but efficacious one of arousing the rebellious wife's jealousy. A stenographer, whose fragile brain is cracked on the subject of Hellenic mythology and the worship of beauty, and whom *Pelling* discharged from his employ because of her tendency to introduce quotations from Swinbourne and Browning into his business letters, is available as a fellow conspirator. The plan is that *Pelling* shall pretend to adopt his wife's views and invite the stenographer into his household in order to convert her to the glorious cause of emancipated woman. It might also be said that the stenographer's name is plain *Elizabeth*, although her Grecian predilections lead her to call herself *Kalleia*.

This alignment of Mr. Sutro's puppets prepares the way for the series of cleverly written dialogues and discussions which supply the humorous interest of the play. They are generally neatly turned, if not at all dramatic, and they are aimed to provoke laughter, except at one point, in which a dash of irrelevant seriousness is introduced, when *Pelling* is overcome by a sentimental interest in *Kalleia* which is aroused by her guileless, unsophisticated little ways. It moves him to give her an impulsive kiss and then to pay her at once double the price he has promised for her services and dismiss her in order to get her out of harm's way. His solicitude, however, is groundless, for meanwhile, something of which he is quite unaware has been occurring under his very nose. *Kalleia's* studies at the feet of the Pecksniffian *Woodhouse* have led to an attachment between her and the "master." So when *Sophie*, now unable to conceal her jealousy of *Kalleia*, confesses her penitence and expresses a desire to rid the house of her former idols, the "master" proves how great a humbug he has been by renouncing his doctrines and going off to Greece to saturate himself with the beauties of Hellenic art, in company with *Kalleia* and on the money she has earned. Thus is *Pelling's* perplexity relieved and *Sophie's* danger removed, although the more consistent *Dulcie Elstead* remains obdurate and goes forth to break up other homes with her destructive feminist philosophy.

The conclusions of the play, of course, have no real bearing on the theories it pretends to expose, though it succeeds in holding some of them up to ridicule. Acting of a requiring kind is not needed in a successful impersonation of the characters, for none of them is more than a puppet. However, the rôle of *Pelling* gives Mr. Drew an opportunity to be debonair and graceful and to dis-

play again that ease of manner which he knows so well how to employ. Nina Sevensen gives a clever satirical twist to the rôle of *Sophie*, which is the more interesting character of the two. Mary Boland is a vision of pink loveliness as *Kalleia*, with a soul for beauty but no brain, and Hubert Druce and Margaret Waterson are humorous respectively as the oleaginous *Woodhouse* and the acidy *Mrs. Elstead*. If "The Perplexed Husband" is another testimony to the anaemic state of English



Photograph by White, New York.  
Brandon Hurst as Attorney Irwin. Jane Cowl as  
in "Within"

play-writing which Sir Arthur Wing Pinero regretfully admits, it nevertheless is not without humor.

**T**HE hearty laughter stirred in every audience by the misadventures of *Little Miss Brown* is an elixir of life which promises a long and happy career for the new farce by Mr. Philip Bartholomae to which her name gives the title.

Of course, we have all met this *Little Miss Brown* before. We remember her as innocent and demure—a pretty, blue-

eyed, shrinking feminine thing with a blank baby stare

We all expect to meet her again, under other circumstances, perhaps, but unshorn of her unsophisticated, rural inexperience. We realize, indeed, that she was born in Paris, the nursery of door-slamming farce. Yet we like her none the less because of long acquaintance.

This time *Little Miss Brown* comes alone to the great city. She has lost her baggage and been robbed of her purse. She is confused, hungry and weary. She goes to a hotel. It is late at night. Although the worldly-wise telephone girl would help her if she dared, the dyspeptic, misanthropic clerk is adamant to her entreaties for a room for the night. He, too, he says, has met *Little Miss Brown* before. Besides, on the reputation of the hotel depends his job.

So *Little Miss Brown* hangs disconsolately around the writing room and presently the room clerk is relieved for the night. In her distress

she jumps at the telephone girl's sly tip. If Misses are unwelcome at the hotel after the sun has set, there is no similar prejudice against a Mrs. *Little Miss Brown* has overheard that



Mary Turner, and Florence Nash as Agnes Lynch, the Law.



Photograph by White, New York.  
Jane Cowl as *Mary Turner* in "Within the Law."

a *Mr. and Mrs. Philip Dennison* have engaged a suite but are not expected until the next day. Why not, it occurs to *Little Miss Brown*, pretend that she is *Mrs. Dennison* and occupy the suite—just for the night? She tries the scheme. It works like a charm. But only for a little time.

Now it is morning. *Mr. Dennison*, meanwhile, has come to the great city in advance of *Mrs. Dennison*, and, without exploring the suite, has gone to bed in one of the vacant rooms. Both he and *Little Miss Brown* order their breakfasts sent to the sitting room; and thus, with the sunshine streaming through the window, they meet face to face. Here's a pretty howdy do!

*Mr. Dennison* has not been married very long. His visit to the city is to meet a rich old uncle and aunt who wish to become acquainted with the new *Mrs. Dennison* and turn over to the happy bridal pair some bonds on which to set up house-keeping. Of course they mistake *Little Miss Brown* for *Mrs. Dennison*.

*Mr. Dennison* cannot explain plausibly, so he doesn't try. Then arrives the real *Mrs. Dennison*, who is in no mood to listen to explanations, even if they were possible. Also comes the misanthropic hotel clerk, who instantly recognizes the false *Mrs. Dennison* as the real *Little Miss Brown* whom he turned away the night before.

Thus do the complications multiply. A sensible word spoken at the right moment would set everything in order. But by the inexorable law of farce that word must not be said. Mishaps must follow each other so rapidly that the audience is given no time to think.

Lawyers are called. *Mrs. Dennison's* attorney is the young man to whom *Little Miss Brown* is engaged. *Mr. Dennison's* advocate is the handsome young fellow whom *Little Miss Brown* met in the train on the day before, with the result that both had lost their hearts at first sight. The old uncle and aunt are kept in the dark while the wrangling goes on, and presently there is a new pairing of couples—all except *Mr. and Mrs. Dennison*, who become reconciled.

It is discouraging to attempt to describe a good farce. One is forced to deal only with its framework, whereas its real interest grows out of its amusing by-play. The spoken word which sounds so funny in the utterance becomes dull and flat when it is written. A glance, a gesture, an inflection of the voice may mean a volume.

Nevertheless "Little Miss Brown" is extremely amusing and never more so than in a little silent scene in which the distracted *Mr. Dennison* attempts to lower the unhappy heroine from the hotel window five stories to the street below by means of a sheet torn into strips. The arrival of the clerk saves *Little Miss Brown's* life and adds to the circumstantial evidence of *Mr. Dennison's* guilt.

The acting, too, is quite clever, with Madge Kennedy as *Miss Brown*, William Morris and Olive Harper Thorne as the *Dennisons*, Charles Stanley and Terese Deagle as the rural uncle and aunt, Ned A. Sparks as the unsympathetic clerk and Rae Bowden as the kindly telephone girl.

It will be months before "Little Miss Brown" will relax its interest.

**H**OW secure is the place the Hippodrome holds in the world of Make-Believe may be gauged by the fact that every year more than a million people look with wonder at the scenic marvels of its mammoth productions. Few visitors to New York resist the lure of this giant among playhouses. Sophisticated indeed must be those whom its spectacles fail to thrill.

In the evolution of the Hippodrome's shows, the tendency has always been toward a higher standard of delicacy and beauty. This year the advance is even more noticeable than before, for the blare and excitement and tinsel glitter of other days are largely absent from the singularly beautiful spectacle, "Under Many Flags," and the equally lovely "Ballet Of The Flowers Of Nations," though in sheer volume the production preserves the best traditions of other seasons. So filled is it with action and color and so many-sided are its interests that the pen which attempts to describe it halts in discouragement.

Long ago these annual spectacles outgrew the capacity of any one mind to evolve. For the new monster entertainment four wizards of the stage are responsible. It is Arthur Voeglin once more who has devised the show's general plan, though nearly equal credit belongs to William J. Wilson, who superintended its staging and the grouping of

its three hundred actors and dancers. Carroll Fleming supplied the dramatic scenes which link the vast stage pictures together, and Manuel Klein contributed to it a musical setting much superior to his work in the past.

These magicians have again followed the plan of taking their audiences to bizarre and interesting places in far-away corners of the world. Thus is derived the title of the spectacle. The pictures they have conjured show the customs of ten widely separated peoples; and then, for good measure, when the transformation, "The Court Of The Crystal Fountains," is reached, they make possible a glimpse into the enchanted regions of Fairyland itself.

No startling innovations have been attempted in the show. The marvelous realism of the departure of an ocean liner from its pier in the spectacle of three years ago remains unrivaled, but the producers have now provided a good substitute in a savage Western tornado which uproots an entire village; and they have even tamed a prairie fire to obey their commands. Then, too, a monster airship is seen in night flight over an illuminated city with the illusion so devised that the audience imagines itself aboard the high-sailing craft.

The tourists set out from the lawn in front of the White House at Washington and halt first at Annapolis, where the cadets of the United States Naval Academy are seen in intricate infantry and artillery drills. A longer flight leads to an out-of-the-way fishing hamlet in Brittany, which is delightfully quaint and lovely, and where the life of the hardy seafarers is charmingly shown. Not less picturesque and beautiful is Holland with its forest of windmills and its peasant tulip growers in the costumes of the long ago. A Berlin summer garden affords a glimpse into the land of beer and pretzels, and then comes a public square in Moscow, with customs of the Slavs and sports of Tartar horsemen.

Next, amid the squealing of many bagpipes, you find yourself transported to the Highlands of Scotland, where braw laddies in kilts and plaids stalk real deer among the lofty crags, and pretty lassies dance and make merry in the valley. Then you are whirled to far away





Photograph by White, New York.

White House Scene from

Cathay to peep into a street in Pekin, which teems with Oriental life, and to see, by the way, a group of Chinese maidens in one of the loveliest dances of the entire spectacle. Finally you go to Arizona, where a full fledged Wild West show is suddenly interrupted by the twin furies of cyclone and prairie fire. There remains a Persian scene, which is wonderfully like a tale from the "One Thousand And One Nights" come to life, and then dawns what is the Hippodrome's crowning glory this year—the ballet of "The Flowers Of The Nations."

In other years the Hippodrome's great stage may have shown ballets more effulgent, more dazzling to the eye in the glittering of their tinseling and more riotous in their coloring, for, one after the other, birds, jewels and butterflies

have been personified. But never before has the Hippodrome attained such exquisite harmonies or stirred the imagination with such artistic symbolism. Into a picture which represents a peach orchard in full bloom troop the two hundred *coryphées*. There are the rock-iris of Austria, the carnations of Spain, the verbenas of Russia, the cornflowers of Germany, the violets of Italy, the lilies of France, the roses of England and, lastly, in a brilliant burst of waving yellow, the golden-rod of America. It was the genius of a true artist that imagined such wonderful color harmonies, and the skill of a painter that blended them into the shadings and groupings which dissolve only to form again with new beauties as the dance proceeds.

It should be added that the circus, without which no Hippodrome show is



New York Hippodrome.

complete, is not an integral part of the spectacle this year, and therefore does not destroy the artistic symmetry of the whole. The acts are as numerous as ever; they also are quite as amazing, but they help to illustrate the pastimes of the people in each of the scenes in which they are introduced. Thus even the acrobats contribute to the imaginative quality of "Under Many Flags."

ONE of the inconsistencies which complicate the mystery of human nature is the fascination which the criminal and his nefarious pursuits exert over most of us in the theatre. We may abhor evil in its actual manifestation, but seen through the spectacles of the stage, it never fails to produce its thrill.

As often as a good melodrama of the underworld reaches the footlights this

strange propensity asserts itself anew. And not since Mrs. Fiske appeared in "Leah Kleschna," half a dozen years ago, has it been more clearly shown than in the interest which follows *Mary Turner* and her comrades in evil in their careers through Mr. Bayard Veiller's melodrama, "Within The Law."

*Mary* obtains her grip on her audience at the very outset of the play. She is an underpaid salesgirl in a great department store, a pitiable victim of circumstances, who is about to be railroaded to prison for a crime she did not commit. The despairing plea she makes to her employer is not alone for herself. She eloquently presents the case of her needy fellow workers and implores for them a decent living wage. As we already know it was the trembling *Helen Morris* who really stole the laces found in *Mary's*

locker, we are able to feel the full force of *Mary's* vehement protest that she is not a thief. But old *Gilder* is deaf to her entreaties and she is led away to three years' confinement.

Four years have passed, when we again encounter *Mary* in the second act. The injustice she has suffered has turned her into an instrument of revenge. The debt which society owes her she has resolved to collect. But she is determined not to place herself again in the grip of the courts. The band of expert forgers, black-mailers and confidence people of which she is the directing genius has prospered under her expert leadership. The system which she pursues in her depredations is to keep just within the law.

How *Mary* and her companions fleece their victims, confound the police and avoid paying the penalty for their deeds provides a number of ingenious if theatric situations, and then comes the chance for her sweetest revenge. Young *Richard Gilder*, a son of her old employer, becomes infatuated by her beauty and secretly marries her. The wedding takes place on the very night that her confederates have violated their pact to keep just within the law and have planned to steal from old *Gilder's* house a collection of valuable tapestries.

The crime has been instigated by a stool-pigeon, working in the interest of the police, who have hounded *Mary* since her release from prison. She learns of the plot at the eleventh hour and hastens to *Gilder's* house to frustrate it. She succeeds in gaining admission but it is too late. With the rest of the gang she is surprised by the police, but not until the stool-pigeon has been found out by *Joe Garson*, the forger, who shoots the traitor with a muffled revolver. *Mary* now craftily comes to her confederate's rescue. She justifies her presence in the

house by proclaiming her marriage to young *Dick Gilder*. Then she asserts that it was he who fired the fatal shot. Is it a crime, she asks, for her husband to shoot an intruder who has broken into the house in the night with evil intent?

Young *Gilder's* confidence in the woman who has married him only to wreak vengeance on his father gradually has its regenerating influence upon *Mary*. She begins to feel an honest devotion for the youth she has tried to ruin. But Mr. Veiller does not lose sight of the fact that melodrama, not romance, is his goal. So there are more exciting scenes which show the abuse to which prisoners are subjected by the police in the effort to force their victims to confess. At last, in a very well arranged episode, *Joe Garson* admits that it was he who fired the fatal shot. Then comes *Helen Morris* to confess that it was she who did the pilfering for which *Mary* was sent to prison. The storm clouds are thus dispelled and the heroine and her husband set out on the road to happiness.

Jane Cowl, who impersonates *Mary Turner*, is most successful when she pleads the case of the falsely accused shopgirl in the opening act. When the heroine starts out on her career of vengeance, Miss Cowl denies *Mary* the hardness which the character demands; but she is beautiful and imposing, and plays her scenes with much emotional power. In other respects also the play is well acted, for its cast contains such able performers as William B. Mack in the rôle of the forger, *Joe Garson*; Dodson Mitchell as the department store magnate; Orme Caldara as the son; Florence Nash as an artful and humorous black-mailer; Walton Taylor as a brutal Inspector of Police, and half a dozen others as denizens of the underworld.